The BOY SCOUT TREASURE HUNTERS

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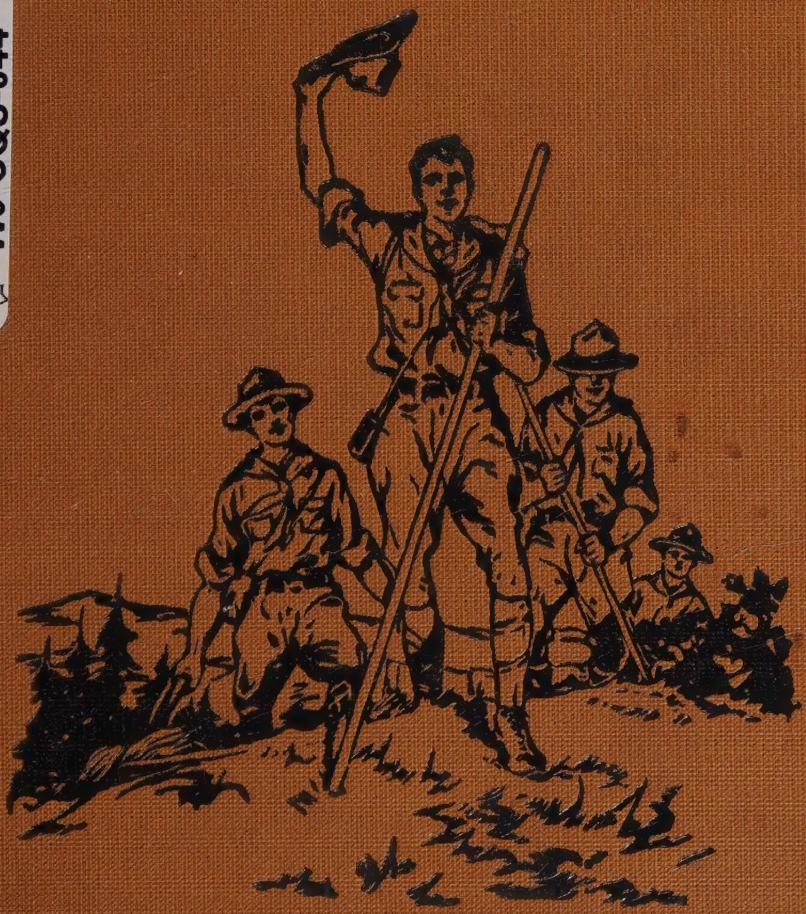

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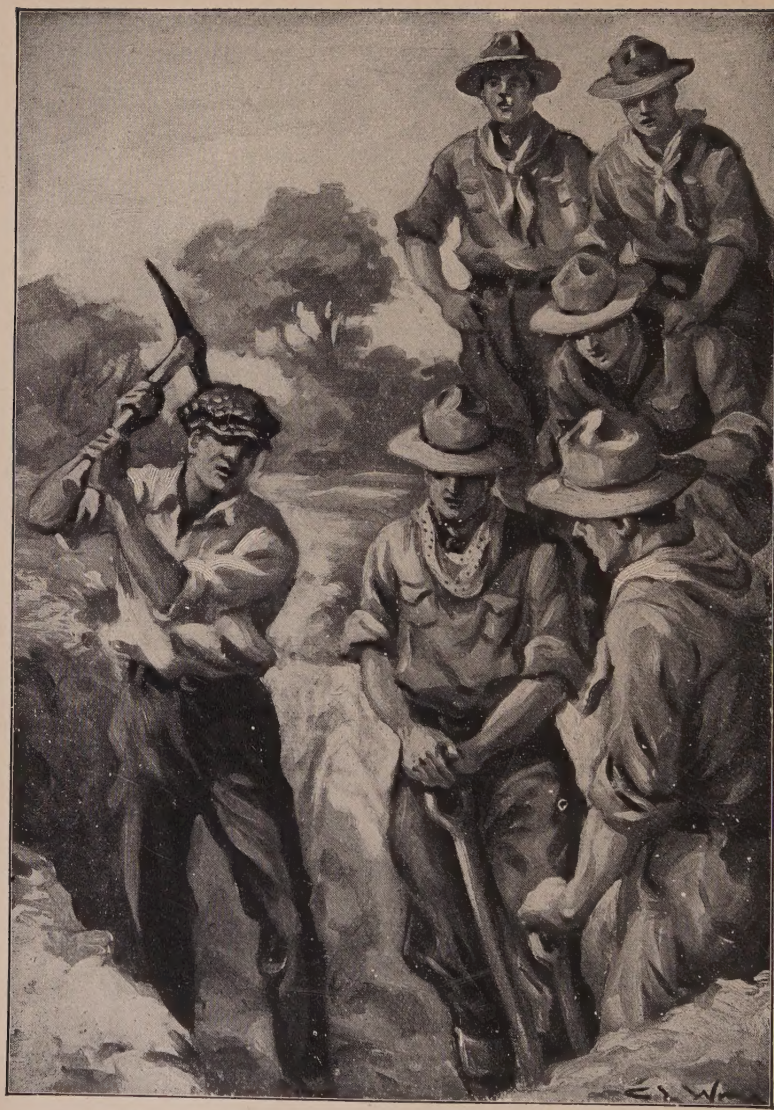

A few rapid and accurate strokes with the pick loosened the hard earth. (Page 96) *Frontispiece*

THE BOY SCOUT TREASURE HUNTERS

OR

THE LOST TREASURE OF BUFFALO HOLLOW

BY

CHARLES HENRY LERRIGO

ILLUSTRATED BY
CHARLES L. WRENN

PUBLISHED WITH THE APPROVAL OF
THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

PUBLISHERS
BARSE & CO.
NEW YORK, N. Y. NEWARK, N. J.

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by
BARSE & CO.

The Boy Scout Treasure Hunters

Printed in the United States of America

TO MY SON

FRANK LERRIGO

IN THE HOPE THAT IT MAY
HELP HIM TO BE A
"GOOD SCOUT"

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THE BOY SCOUT TREASURE HUNTERS

CHAPTER I

GLEN MASON RUNS AWAY

IT was the supper hour at the State Industrial School for Boys, known to the general public as "The Reform School."

Glen Mason sat on a long bench trying to hold the place next to him against the stealthy ravages of the boys who crowded him.

"Where's Nixy?" he inquired angrily of his neighbor on the right. "Did he go to town again?"

"He's back," the boy replied. "Just got in an' had to go up and change his clothes. Had the toothache again to-day, he told me. Here he comes, now."

A lanky boy of fifteen or sixteen got into the vacant seat just as the chaplain rose to say grace. After grace no loud talking was permitted, but no

objection was made to whispered conversations that did not become too noisy.

"How's it come you go to town so often and I don't ever get to go, Nixy?" whispered Glen, the moment grace was ended.

"One thing you don't have the toothache, another thing you get too many demerits. The fellows that get to town have to go thirty days without a black sign. You never could do it, Glen."

"I could if I wanted. I'm twenty days now. Wouldn't hurt me to go another ten. If I went to town alone I'd never come back."

"It ain't so easy, Glen. You have to wear your uniform so everybody knows what you are. If you aren't back by six o'clock they have the police after you. The old man made a great talk about his honor system, but as long as you have to wear your uniform there's plenty of people to watch you."

"I could find a way to get around that," insisted Glen.

"Well, so could I. I've got one all planned out that I'm going to work some day. I'll get leave to go to the dentist late some afternoon. The car to come back leaves his office at five o'clock. He doesn't want to stay until five because he goes off to play golf. So he'll leave me in his waiting-room

when he goes. I'll have a suit of overalls rolled up under my uniform. Soon as the doctor goes I'll change my clothes. You can't get out without being seen but I'll hide right there in the building till it closes and then get down the fire-escape."

"I guess somebody'd see you go down and a policeman would get you."

"I guess they wouldn't. I wouldn't try till late at night when there wasn't anybody around. Then I'd pick a dark night, and that fire-escape is in the back end of the building, so I guess there wouldn't nobody see me."

"Oh, mebbe there wouldn't. Supposin' you did get away. Where'd you go?"

"I'd have that all fixed. I'd put on my other clothes and pitch my uniform away and that night would get me twenty-five miles where nobody'd think of looking for me."

"Oh, I dunno. I guess you'd be easy picked up. Anybody could tell you a mile off. All to do is to look for a broom handle out walking all by itself."

"Broom handle yourself, Glen Mason. I've got the makings of a big man if ever I'd get enough to eat."

"You go high enough up to be a big man, but you've stretched too much. If you'd ever learn

to be a contortionist and tie yourself into three knots close together, you'd do better."

"You're always saying something mean. I wish I hadn't told you my plan at all."

"I won't do anything to your old plan."

"I ain't so sure. 'Twouldn't be above ye to steal it."

"I s'pose you dare me to do it."

"Yes, I dare ye to do it."

"An' you think I'd steal a plan from a mate?"

"I think you'd do anything."

There were many who had just as poor an opinion of Glen. He himself found it remarkably easy to do mean and low acts and had almost ceased to wonder at himself. Every day seemed to find a lower level for his setting. Nixon had correctly guessed his thoughts. Already he was turning over in his mind the feasibility of Nixon's plan of escape and wondering if he could himself take advantage of it. He had been in the reform school over a year, but it had not reformed him. The new superintendent, with his kindness, had won the hearts of many of the most wayward boys, but no impression had he made on Glen. As a matter of fact the boy rather laughed at his foolishness. To put boys on their honor, to trust the merit boys to go into town without guard, all was new policy,

and the only interest Glen had in it was to take advantage of it. Let him get one single chance to go to town alone and the reform school would see no more of him. Just what he would do he did not know. Sometimes a fleeting thought of going home to see the mother whose heart must be almost broken by his waywardness and the young sister and brother who were carefully guarded from knowledge of the disgrace he had brought upon them would come to him. But though he was supposed to be dead to impulses for reform there always crept into his mind the desire that his return home should be only when he had enough money and enough honor so that he should not be welcomed as a penitent but as a conquering hero. Glen was much given to great thoughts of the mighty things he would do and the high stations he would occupy. Unfortunately his pride of thought had never made him insist that his inclination yield to right instead of to desire. Glen Mason's fault was easily summed up—he desired always his own way and had so allowed this inclination to fill his life that he was utterly regardless of others. Given his own way he was a pleasant chum, a good friend and a brave comrade.

When Glen wanted a thing very badly he would go to great lengths to get it. Having set for his

goal the thirty days of good behavior marks he was bound to win it, though greatly to the surprise of the officers who had never known Glen to pass so long a time without fracturing a great number of rules. No sooner was his time up than he asked leave to go to town to visit the dentist.

The Superintendent was rather disturbed by the request. He had been both pleased and surprised by Glen's good behavior. Now that the boy had earned the privilege of going to town without guard he did not wish to spoil his good work by a refusal to trust him. Yet he was suspicious. He asked that Glen be sent to the office.

"Why do you want to go to the dentist, Glen?" he asked kindly. "What attention do your teeth need?"

Glen was confused. So far as he knew his teeth were sound as bullets. He had not sunk to the place where lies were easy of expression.

"I don't know just what, sir," he stammered, wishing that he could think of something. "The dentist will know what they need."

This was as good an answer as he could have made, although stumbled on by chance.

"You want the dentist to go over them to find what is the matter, do you?" said the soft-hearted superintendent.

"Yes, sir. I want the dentist to find what is the matter."

"It isn't a bad idea," said the superintendent. "It won't be necessary for you to go to town, though, for the dentist is coming out here next week."

"But I don't want to wait until next week," cried Glen. "I want to go to-day. I want him to pull one out."

"Which one?" inquired the superintendent.

It made little difference to Glen which tooth he denoted for the sacrifice. Now that he had told the lie he would stay by it. He pointed to a big double tooth and resolved that he would remember it.

The superintendent looked at the tooth and at the boy.

"Perhaps you don't know how much that tooth is worth?"

"No, sir," agreed Glen.

"A very conservative price is a hundred dollars, at your age. You wouldn't throw a hundred dollars away."

"No, sir; but I want it pulled."

It was all very well to talk of a hundred dollars, but when Glen had his mind set on a matter he would make any sacrifice.

"Well, you must not have it pulled. But have the dentist look at it. I will give you a pass for this afternoon. You will wear your uniform, walk to the car line and take the street car to the dentist's office. Let me ask you one thing, Glen. Don't forget to come back."

It was as if the superintendent read his thoughts. Glen changed color and looked foolish. He could think of only one thing to say. "At what time, sir?"

"You will be in by six o'clock. As you go to town and see the boys at liberty on the streets remember that if you keep up your good behavior you may soon be paroled and be as free as they. All you have to do, Glen, is to keep it up."

As he went to put on his uniform, the hated uniform that made it so hard for him to lose himself in the crowd, Glen realized better how it was that Nixon and some of the others who had been given liberty in town had never violated their trust. It seemed abominably mean and small to go back on a man like this. He actually began to have his own doubts. But it was very hard for Glen Mason to give up anything on which he had set his heart.

There were several things went wrong which were quite disturbing. In the first place he was obliged to change his clothing under the eye of the

physical director which utterly spoiled any scheme of hiding a suit of overalls under his uniform. The walk to the street car and the ride to the doctor's office would have been very enjoyable had not every one stared at him and his uniform. More than once he heard some one say "There goes a reform school boy." Then the dentist did all manner of things in his efforts to find the nonexistent aching tooth. Finally he did find an area of tenderness in an entirely different tooth to the one specified.

"Does this tooth hurt you more than the others?" he asked.

"It does," Glen agreed, quite truthfully, an involuntary "Ouch" following his words.

"I thought as much," the doctor observed. "It is often hard to locate the pain definitely. The nerve reflexes are responsible for it. I will now drill into this and see what we find."

"Do you have to drill?" asked Glen.

"Surely. Have to clean out all the old decayed tooth before I fill it. I often give the boys from the school a little sermon by telling them the bad has to be cleaned out before you get sound living."

"Make it as easy as you can," Glen requested.

"Yes, of course. But cleaning out decay often hurts."

It did hurt but Glen would have fainted rather than make an outcry.

The doctor stepped to the 'phone and called up the superintendent.

"It's all right with the Mason boy," he said. "I've done all I can to-day for him. I'm leaving now. What shall he do until time for his car."

He turned to Glen as he received a reply.

"You are to wait until five o'clock in my reception room and then take the inter-urban car," he said, locking the inner office when they passed out. "I am leaving a little early to-night."

Before he left he stepped into a little closet which led out of the reception room and changed his office clothes. Glen's eyes sparkled. His problem was solved.

At five o'clock Glen Mason rode down in the elevator to the ground floor and asked the elevator man how he could identify the inter-urban car. But instead of leaving the building he dodged back to the stairway as soon as the elevator had started on its return trip and ran stealthily up the stairs and again entered the dentist's reception room. It was empty. Glen boldly entered the little closet and dressing himself in the dentist's office clothes made a bundle of his uniform. The closet was both deep and high. He climbed to the top shelf

and shoved his bundle far back over its wide surface against the wall. He dared not risk going out in the doctor's clothing in daylight. He must stay until the building was deserted and use the fire escape. His great fear was lest some one should come to the reception room. The only safeguard was concealment in the hot, dark closet. He waited hours without any disturbance. He felt sure that it must be almost midnight. Stealthily he opened the door of the closet and stepped to a window. It was still daylight, though the sun was setting. He returned to his closet.

It must have been some hours afterward that he heard footsteps and voices outside the door. In sudden desperation he climbed up and lay flat on the wide shelf where he had hidden the uniform. Someone opened the door of the closet, glanced inside and shut it again.

"I tell you I took him down about five o'clock and showed him his car. He ain't here," said the voice of the elevator man.

"I have to make sure," replied his companion.

Glen knew the voice for that of one of the school officials. So already they were seeking him!

After all was quiet Glen ventured to open the closet door and peep out. It was dark now but there were lights in the hall. After a long time

they were extinguished and the building seemed deserted. The last late worker departed. The elevator ceased its rhythmic motion.

Glen waited yet longer for a time and then crept down the hall to the fire-escape, which he made out by a red light. It was a dark night, but, nerved to the act, he made no hesitation as he swung himself out on to the iron bars. It was an old-fashioned escape, bars at wide intervals so close to the wall as to leave hardly a toe hold. Down, down he went, not daring to look to see where he was going but clinging fast and letting one step follow another. Then suddenly the ladder stopped. Feel as he would, in this direction or in that, there were no more steps. He had known of fire-escapes ending ten or twelve feet from the ground with an extension which might be lowered. But he found no extension. He looked down, but it was black night and he could see nothing but shadowy outlines. Looking up, the ladder soon disappeared in the darkness. There was no sense in mounting again. He let down his legs as far as he could reach, with his body balanced on his elbows, then he let himself hang by his hands and kicked out in the hope of finding some landing. There was nothing to be felt but the brick wall. His arms grew

tired as he swung. His efforts to draw up again were ineffectual. In desperation he swung off into space.

Splash! He was choking and gasping in water!

CHAPTER II

A FRIEND AND A FOE

SPLASHING about in his watery quarters Glen speedily discovered that he had fallen into an enormous rain barrel. He was able to reach the top with his hands, and lost no time in drawing himself up and crawling over the side. Then he stood in the shelter of the barrel and wrung a gallon or so of water out of the doctor's clothes. When the job was finished he had pretty well destroyed the identity of that suit of clothing. The draggled, wrinkled and stained garments bore no resemblance to the neat office suit. His mishap had given material help in effecting a disguise.

He struck out away from the town and met no one to interfere with him as he walked along the quiet residence streets. Just at the edge of the city he was attracted by a great illumination. It was the electric lighting of a park, which even at that hour was thronged with visitors. The boy who had been shut up for a year and more looked hungrily through the great entrance way. It was free to all. He walked cautiously in, keeping a

suspicious eye wide for policemen; for though he thought he was free he was in bondage to his guilty conscience.

Of the many attractions the one which made the greatest appeal to Glen—and the only one he could afford, for his sole fortune was the nickel he had for car-fare—was the merry-go-round with its gaudy horses and its gurdy tunes. He bought a ticket and mounted one of the turbulent steeds with a little thrill of anticipatory pleasure. The music began, the movement gradually quickened, and he was just giving himself up to the pleasure of it when he saw working toward him, on the inside running-board, a man collecting tickets. On his coat was the nickeled badge of a constable. Glen did not know that he was a special officer for the sole purpose of protecting his own outfit against rowdies. In his eyes it was the approach of the law. Although they were now swinging round at a good rate he slipped from his horse and jumped, at peril of his neck. The sight of an official badge struck terror to his soul.

So it was wherever he went. He saw in every man an officer. One might have supposed the park policed by an army. He had just dodged one of the two real park policemen when he overheard a momentous conversation.

A man from the bathhouse came by.

"Anything doing, Jake?" he asked the officer.

"Nothing much," replied the policeman. "They 'phoned us a boy got away from the reform school. They think he might just have come out to the park for fun and overstayed. Ain't seen any one, have ye?"

"Not me."

"Well, if he's in here we'll get him as he goes out. I'll watch one gate and Barney the other."

So they were on the look out for him. But there was nothing in his present clothing to suggest the reform school boy, and though he was hatless there were numbers of hatless boys in the park. There were many people of all kinds, in fact, and if he went with the crowd, he could surely slip out unnoticed. Yet he feared to attempt to pass the representative of the law at the gate. How conscience doth make cowards of us all!

It was a good deed, done impulsively, that solved Glen's problem. An automobile was passing. The occupants were all watching the bathers in the lake, excepting a little chap of three who had seized the opportunity to climb over the door with the evident idea of jumping to the ground. When Glen saw him he was poised on the running board ready for his jump. Like a flash Glen jumped for the

footboard of the moving car and interposed his body as an obstacle to the little fellow's leap. The women in the car screamed and the man who was driving stopped his car in surprise at the intrusion. It was only when Glen hauled the little boy up to view that they saw what he had done.

"I am Jonathan Gates," said the man, offering Glen his hand, "and this is my wife and daughter. We don't know how to thank you for saving that little scamp from harm."

"We might at least take you back into town," suggested Mrs. Gates.

"But I am going west, into the country," said Glen.

"That is still better," said Mr. Gates. "We live eight miles west of here and will take you wherever you say."

"I'll go just as far as you go," Glen replied. "I live away out west and am on my way on foot. Every mile is a help."

They passed through the gates without any notice from the officer who was watching for an escaped Reform School boy, and Glen felt safe again.

"We have not visited the park in a long while," explained Mrs. Gates, "and it was all new to us. That is why we lost sight of Jack. He was very

anxious to run back and see the monkeys again."

"I have never been there before at all," said Glen. "And I am glad I saw this monkey. I was passing and I just went in by chance."

"Not chance," said Mr. Gates. "Let us say Providence. Our boy might have been badly hurt or even killed. Certainly you were led by Providence, or I would rather be more definite and say the hand of God."

"Oh I don't know. I guess not," stammered Glen, greatly embarrassed. He wondered what Mr. Gates would say if he knew that he came to the park in running away from the reform school. He had not yet learned that the power of God may even overrule our evil for good. But he was quite willing to agree that his good fortune in meeting the Gates family might be God's providence.

He felt his good fortune still more when Mrs. Gates insisted that he must stay with them at least one night. He yielded, thinking that he would get up very early and slip away before they were astir in the morning. But the excitement of the day had such an effect that he overslept and did not waken until called to breakfast.

The effect of this family was something such as Glen had never known. All they knew of him was his name, but they took him at his word. They

accepted his statements without a question—a most unusual thing in his experience. They showed him every kindness. At breakfast Mr. Gates heaped his plate with good things. They were so cordial in their invitation to stay and rest for awhile that he could not refuse them. They showed to him such a spirit of love as made him feel that, after all, Christian people were different from others, and to begin to be sorry that he had taken advantage of the good, old superintendent. They planted in his softened heart seeds of kindness and love which were bound to blossom.

Glen stayed two days, and might have remained longer, but on the morning of the third day, coming down early, he picked up the day-old paper which Mr. Gates had been reading. It was folded back at a place which told of his disappearance from the reform school. He was ashamed to look again in their faces, so he stole out the back way, passed through the barn, and thus made his way out into the dusty road.

His thoughts, as he trudged along, were far from cheerful. Although he had strong, boyish desires to fare forth into the world alone, he much disliked to leave this cheery home. Had he been a clean, honorable boy with a good record he might have stayed there and learned to be a man.

His gloomy thoughts were diverted by the sight of a man who seemed to be having troubles of his own. He was down at the side of an automobile, perspiring freely and vexed with the whole world as he unsuccessfully labored at changing a tire. The automobile was no ordinary car. It had a driver's seat in front and a closed car behind like the closed delivery wagons Glen had seen in town. Bright colored letters announced to the world that J. Jervice supplied the public with a full line of novelties, including rugs, curtains, rare laces and Jervice's Live Stock Condition Powders.

"Can I help you," volunteered Glen. It is worthy of note that the service was freely offered before the man spoke so much as a word. It had not been Glen's habit to volunteer help. He was feeling the influence of the home he had just left.

The offer was not kindly received. The man's reply was so churlish as to leave open the suspicion that he was not naturally a man of pleasant ways.

"Garn away f'm here," he snarled. "I don't need no boys spyin' around my car."

"Who's spyin'?" asked Glen defiantly. "You seem to need somebody pretty bad. You ain't man enough to strip that tire off."

"Nor nobody else wouldn't be," declared the

man. "Leastways nobody with jest one pair of hands. While I pry it off one end it slips back on the other. Are you strong?" he asked, stopping to look at Glen.

"I'm pretty stout for my age," admitted Glen, modestly, "but I don't want to help nor spy, if you don't want me."

"I could use another pair of hands," the peddler admitted. "I can't pay you nothing for it, though, unless it be a ride to town."

"That is just what I want," agreed Glen. "It's a bargain."

The perspiration of Mr. J. Jervice had not been without occasion. The tire he was trying to change had done good service—it was, in fact, the very first tire that wheel had ever carried. Perhaps it cherished fond hopes of remaining in service as long as the wheel to which it clung—at least it resisted most strenuously all efforts to detach it. Both Glen and the man were moist with their efforts before it came away, and they accumulated still more dirt and moisture in applying its successor. But at last it was all done, and Glen had already mounted to the seat, while his companion was putting away his tools, when a cart drove up alongside and Glen recognized in the driver, Mr. Gates.

"What's the matter?" he asked, as Mr. Gates pulled up his horse.

"What's the matter?" echoed Mr. J. Jervice; "this boy been doing anything?"

It was not an unnatural question for there was something in Mr. Gates's look and in Glen's questioning tone that betokened affairs out of the ordinary; furthermore, Mr. J. Jervice seemed to be so suspicious of people in general that one might well think he had something to conceal.

"The boy's all right," replied Mr. Gates. "I have something to say to him, that's all. If he will come over here we will drive on a few feet while I say it."

Glen's thoughts flew back to the folded newspaper and he was instantly suspicious.

"I don't want to get down," he said. "This gentleman's agreed to give me a ride to town and I don't want to keep him."

"But I want you to stay," replied Mr. Gates. "I will take you to town if you wish, but first I want you to go back home with me and I will tell you something important."

Glen felt one of his old, unrestrained passions rising within him.

"I know what you want," he cried. "I saw the

newspaper. You want to send me back to the reform school."

"I want to help you make a man of yourself," asserted Mr. Gates, unmoved by the boy's passion. "It's true I want you to go back to the school, but I will go with you and speak for you. You must go back because it is the only right way out. Let me tell you, Glen, you will never get over a trouble by running away from it. The manly and Christian thing to do is to go back. And that is why I want you to do it."

"And of course you don't want the reward of ten dollars that's always paid for returning a boy. You wouldn't take the money, would you?"

If the eyes of Mr. Gates were saddened by this mean sneer those of Mr. J. Jervice were not. They lightened with a sudden interest, and he jumped into the battle for the first time.

"This boy's a goin' with me," he told Mr. Gates. "He's earned a ride and I promised it and I'm a man of my word. You be off, now, and leave him alone."

"You are spoiling his best chance," said Mr. Gates. "I am not interested in the school or the reward. I am simply trying to do my duty to the boy."

"Well, you've done it," cried Mr. J. Jervice,

as his car gathered headway. "Good-by to ye."

He turned to Glen as the car got into its speed.

"So you've run away from the reform school, eh? And he was goin' to make ten dollars taking you back?"

"Oh, he didn't want the ten dollars," said Glen, his rage all gone. "He treated me awful fine while I was at his house. I just said that because I was mad. But he can't get me to go back; nor nobody else unless they tie me up first."

"I don't know?" said Mr. J. Jervice. "Ten dollars is pretty near a week's pay for most men."

"That wouldn't make any difference with him," said Glen. "He's straight as a string."

Mr. Gates would have been gratified to know how deep an impression his Christian character had made on this boy who had flouted his kindness.

Mr. J. Jervice was not inclined to conversation —he was puzzling over a problem something akin to that of the fox and the geese (he to be the fox). So they drove along in comparative silence until, topping a hill, Glen exclaimed at the sight of the buildings of a large town.

"Are we almost there?" he asked.

"About three miles yet," said Mr. J. Jervice. "What you going to do when we get there?"

"I'm not sure, but I think I'd better leave you

before we get to town. I don't believe Mr. Gates would telephone the police but somebody else might."

"You can ride with me a couple o' miles yet. Tell ye what ye can do. S'pose'n you get inside. There's lots o' room and there's a ventilator back o' this seat will give ye air. You be real careful and not go fussing around disturbing things. There's things there I wouldn't want ye to touch."

It seemed a good idea. Mr. J. Jervice unlocked the doors in the back and Glen stepped inside. The doors slammed behind him and he heard the heavy steel bar drop into its slots. Then he heard something like a laugh—a foxy laugh. Why should Mr. J. Jervice laugh? At once his suspicions were awakened.

As Mr. J. Jervice climbed to his seat again Glen shouted to him through the venilator.

"Stop," he shouted. "I've changed my mind. I don't like being in here and I believe I'll take my chance with you on the front seat."

Mr. J. Jervice paid no attention.

CHAPTER III

JOLLY BILL IS CONSIDERABLY UPSET

THE treachery of Mr. J. Jervice was now very clear. He had decided that he himself would hand Glen over to the authorities and receive the ten dollars reward. Since Glen was almost as big as he, there had been some question how he should restrain the boy. He thought this all settled by his clever scheme, and the ten dollars practically in his pocket. No wonder he chuckled.

But it is well for those who cage wild animals to be sure that the cage is properly prepared. Glen looked around in the gloom of the car. He knew it was useless to bump against those solid doors. The way out lay through Mr. J. Jervice, and the time for getting out was very brief. On a shelf lay a bundle of sticks. He pulled on one and found on the other end a flag. It was an emblem. The flag should bring him freedom.

Glen found that the flag stick would just poke through the ventilator railing. Being effectively poked it struck Mr. J. Jervice neatly in the back

of the neck, and the poke being vigorous, it aroused his attention quite thoroughly.

"Stop that," he cried, hastily dodging. "Them flags is worth a quarter apiece, and you'll break the handle."

"Stop and let me out," cried Glen.

"I can't stop now. I just made this change to accommodate you, remember. Stopping and starting is awfully expensive—takes as much gasoline as running a mile. We'll be in town in five minutes."

"And then you think you will sell me for ten dollars. You'll lose money on it, Mr. Jervice. I have a sharp, open knife in my hand. I'm going to turn loose on everything in—"

"Don't you dare," shouted Mr. Jervice.

"But I will if you don't stop. You want to send me back to the reform school. All I'll get will be a little longer sentence. Will that pay you for your goods?"

Mr. J. Jervice reluctantly stopped his car. He saw ten dollars vanishing into the atmosphere. Whether Glen would have been as destructive as he threatened does not enter into this record. We are obliged to admit that at this time he was a wilful lad, and he was especially provoked at this man because he had dragged him from the counsel and

aid of Mr. Gates for the sole purpose of his personal gain. It is enough for us to know that Mr. J. Jervice quite believed that a reform school boy with a knife was equal to anything.

"Everything in here is in just as good order as when I came in," said Glen, when the doors were opened. "I earned this ride, so I don't owe you anything. Now you stand away off and let me get out."

There was no need to be so emphatic. Mr. J. Jervice was neither a big man nor a brave man, and had no idea of offering any opposition. He stood well aside as Glen jumped from the car and ran away through the fields.

One thing was very clear to Glen. Mr. J. Jervice would certainly reach town in a few minutes and just as certainly would advise the authorities to look out for him. He might even come back with the officer, knowing that the boy would have but a short start. Glen was standing by an abandoned stone quarry as these thoughts came to him. It contained many nooks and corners in which a boy might hide, and would be far safer for the present than tramping along the road or in the fields. So he picked out a secluded nook and lay there until evening. He watched eagerly for signs of an officer or Mr. J. Jervice, but also fruit-

lessly. Had he but known it he was perfectly safe, for Mr. J. Jervice was again having troubles of his own. Perhaps this was his day for trouble.

Spending a whole day cooped up in a little niche about ten feet long by three wide, even though it be as high as the heavens, is dreary work for a boy. The time dragged terribly. In his work on the school farm Glen had learned to use the sun for a clock quite accurately, so there was no deceiving himself as to time. He had eaten a good breakfast before leaving the Gates' home so there was no occasion for excessive hunger, but he did get very thirsty. Looking down through the old quarry he fancied he saw a pump, and when the sun reached its noon zenith he crept cautiously down and satisfied his thirst. There was no one in sight, yet he felt afraid to venture toward the town before dark, and went back to his hiding place.

On the way back he made a great find. Some careless workman had left a mallet and chisel lying by a huge slab of stone. They were rusted by the weather but otherwise in good condition. Glen took them to his hiding place and spent a great deal of the afternoon cleaning off the rust. Then he began work on a rough block of stone which lay near and was greatly gratified at the result of his

labors. So the afternoon slipped away without the dreariness of the morning.

He was hungry now and tired and consumed with loneliness. His thoughts turned to the pleasant home he had just left with a great longing. They had given him good treatment—the Gates family. He contrasted Mr. Gates with Mr. Jervice, stirring in his bosom a great indignation at the treachery of Jervice, and also awakening a great trust and confidence in Mr. Gates. Perhaps he was right after all. Perhaps it would be a good thing for him to go back to the school, serve out his time, and then try to make a man of himself. If the school had been close at hand he would have gone at once, for the supper-time picture which rose to his mind, with the crowd of boys ready for their plain but wholesome food was a very attractive one just now. Where his supper was to come from he did not know, for his only nickel had paid for the ticket to the merry-go-round.

Now that it was dark enough to make his travel safe he picked up his chisel and mallet and climbed up the side of the quarry. The tools gave him an idea. They were marketable and would surely provide a supper for him. He looked them over as closely as the fading light would allow but found no marks or initials to indicate the owner.

So he felt a little more certain of his plans as he hurried along the road toward the town.

He had no intention of going to a big store and offering the tools for sale. His choice would be rather a small general shop where he could get both food and a hat in exchange for his offering. He felt that the lack of a hat as he walked through the streets would be sure to attract attention. He found just the place he needed at the very outskirts of the town, a little "general utility store" designed to supply the needs of the dwellers in outlying houses who did not wish to go to town for every purchase.

But the dealer was suspicious of a bareheaded boy in a man's suit of clothes offering to trade a mallet and chisel for a meal and a straw hat.

"Where did you get these things?" he asked, as he closely examined the tools.

"I found them in the old quarry east of town," replied Glen.

"You found them! They don't look like tools that have been lying around in an old quarry."

"No, sir. Because I spent all afternoon cleaning them up."

"I hope that's true, boy. I want to be fair with you. Wait a minute while I make a few inquiries."

He turned to the telephone; and even as he did so Glen fled through the open door. It was unfair, miserably unfair, he told himself as he ran, and the hot tears filled his eyes. He had found these tools all rusty, and spent all afternoon cleaning them, and now this man was bound to call up the police. He did not stop to think that if he had been an honest boy with a good record calling up the police would have meant nothing to him.

Glen slowed his pace to a walk after a few blocks; a running boy was too conspicuous. Every time he saw a man in any kind of a uniform he dodged out of his way. A street-car conductor on his way home, who passed near to him, gave him a great scare. And at last came a policeman who really did start after him; at least he walked in his direction and when Glen started to run he ran too. Glen was terribly frightened. He ran madly, not once looking behind, and therefore ignorant of the fact that after one block the officer gave up the chase after a boy who was probably playing some foolish joke. It was a hot night but the sweat on Glen's face was caused as much by terror as by his exertion. He ran not knowing where he was going and at last hardly seeing. Then he swung around a sharp corner, came into collision with some kind of a vehicle, and rolled

over and over with it and its occupant into the gutter.

Glen lay panting from the chase he had given himself, for just a second, and in that second he felt a large hand grip his arm in a firm grasp. But it was not the policeman. Beside him, with his head touching the curb, lay a strong young man. Across their bodies was the vehicle which Glen had overturned, something like a large baby buggy or a small invalid chair, with a steering wheel in front. No one came to their help, for Glen had instinctively selected the quiet streets and this one seemed deserted save for them two. Seeing no policeman in sight Glen gained confidence.

"Let go of my arm," he cried.

"I can't afford to just yet," replied the young man. "It's the only thing I've got to remember you by, unless you count this big bump on the back of my head."

"I didn't mean to hurt you," said Glen.

"I reckon not. I suppose it was thoughtless for me to get in your way. You must have been going somewhere."

"Let me up. Please let me up, and I'll tell you all about it. I want you to help me. It isn't fair. I'm not getting a fair show."

"Oh, that's the way, is it? Well, you're at the right shop. Nobody ever calls on Jolly Bill in vain. You get up and lift this automobile off my quivering frame and we'll see what we can do for you."

Glen crawled out and managed to lift the vehicle off the young man's body.

"Now you can get up, can't you," he asked.

"With your kind assistance, noble sir." He raised himself to a sitting position as he spoke. "This is as far as I get without your aid."

Glen hardly knew how to help, though the conveyance told him that the young man was a cripple.

"How shall I help you?" he asked. "Are your legs paralyzed?"

"Worse than that, young fellow. My legs are dead and buried."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Glen, his heart stirred with sympathy. "I'm glad you have such strong arms. They certainly are alive."

"That's the way to talk about it, boy. Don't worry about what's gone. Look at what you have left. That's what I try to do, and that's why they call me Jolly Bill. Now, a big heave and I can stand on my pegs while you bring my Billy-cart up this way."

He was quite skillful about getting into his cart once Glen had him in the right position.

"Now I'll let you push me home, boy—two blocks ahead and one to your right—and meantime you may tell me the sad story of your eventful career."

"Promise that you won't give me up," said Glen.

"Whew! That sounds awfully interesting. You must be a desperate character, and that perhaps explains your peculiar mode of rapid transit. I'm so curious I promise."

"It isn't so awfully bad," said Glen, feeling that his new friend was poking fun. "I ran away from the reform school, that's all."

"I don't know how bad that is," was the reply. "The question is are you reformed, are you reforming, or are you worse than ever?"

"I want to reform," declared Glen, the first confession of the kind he had ever made.

"I suppose the best way to do it would be to go back to the school," suggested Jolly Bill.

"That's what Mr. Gates said," admitted Glen. "But I don't want to be taken back."

"That sounds pretty fair. You don't want to be taken; you want to go. I want to go, but I have to be taken. I was hoping you were the boy to do some taking for me."

"You mean take you around," exclaimed Glen.

"That's about what I mean. I'm an important personage and wherever I travel I have to have a body guard."

"I'd like to do it better than anything in the world!"

"I believe you're just the boy if the reform school could wait for you a week or two. I have a plan that will make me a fortune; but I can't work it out without a strong, energetic boy to help me."

"I'm the boy," shouted Glen. "Try me. What is it?"

"You won't give my secret away?"

"Never. Upon my—"

"Upon your what?"

"Oh, I suppose you'd say I didn't have any."

"You were going to say upon your honor. Certainly you have honor. You make it every day. To prove my confidence I will tell you my secret. I was born in this neighborhood and lived here most of my life. A few years ago a terrible accident deprived me of my father and at the same time left me as you see me. I support my mother by selling real estate. Twenty miles or so from here I know of a great fortune. But it is hidden away, buried, choked up and forgotten. I have

tried to get my friends to hunt this out for me but they do not see things my way. So I need a strong healthy boy to help me, and together we will find this treasure."

CHAPTER IV

HOW MOTHER CARES

RUNNING away would be very popular with boys if they could be sure of finding such good friends as Glen had met. The reverse is more commonly true. Glen knew well enough that the boy on the road, trusting to chance for friends, is much more apt to fall a prey to people of the J. Jervice variety. He remembered the pitiful plight of a boy who had been returned to the school after falling into the hands of tramps, and he thanked an unknown Providence that he had tumbled into the kind arms of Jolly Bill.

Mother Spencer was just as kind and cheerful as her son, though she neither made jokes nor appreciated those offered by Will.

"This is Glen Mason, mother," said Jolly Bill, when she came out to meet them. "After he had committed assault and battery on my delicate frame, I prevailed on him to bring home the mangled remains."

"You are hurt, Willie!" she cried in alarm. "Your face is scratched and there is blood. Is it serious?"

"I shall recover," said Will. "I have been in rather worse accidents. Take a look at this other dusty, weary specimen. What do you recommend?"

"I beg your pardon," she apologized to Glen. "I was anxious about my boy. I am every time he goes out. I'll just show you up to the bathroom. There is plenty of hot water and soap and towels, and I'll bring you a clean suit that Willie used to wear."

Glen reddened with embarrassment at this goodness.

"Maybe you'd better not," he protested. "You don't know who I am."

"But I know what size you are," she insisted. "This old suit of Willie's has been lying around for years, but it's perfectly good. Now you take and put it on."

"Take it along and wear it," urged Jolly Bill. "It's been shut up in the closet so long it may turn two or three handsprings when it gets out in the sunshine, but otherwise it will fit you all right. Mother's kept the moth out of it long enough."

Soaking in a tub of clean water after his hot and dusty day, with a nice suit of clean clothing ready to put on, Glen felt that he was indeed

fortunate. He actually concluded that he was getting better treatment than he deserved. He was still embarrassed by the thought, when he went downstairs and found Will and his mother at the table.

"I've told mother all about you," announced Bill. "You have her official seal of approval."

"Don't mind what he says," interrupted Mrs. Spencer. "A boy who wants to do right always has a place with me. But you get a reserved seat because you're going to help Willie."

"I hope I'll be able to. I'll surely try."

"Oh, you're just the strong young fellow he needs. He's had the plan quite a while but so many people—"

"Not so very many, mother," interrupted Will. "Very few people know of it."

"Well, the people that you've told—you know how they have all acted or spoken as if it were a wild goose chase—"

"They think so; that's their privilege."

"No it isn't. They shouldn't think so. You've studied it out and you know it's as bright a thought as ever helped any man to a fortune and I'm glad this big boy is going to help you work it."

"And then I'll be rich enough to buy you a

home, and to go to that big hospital and get my old pegs fixed up so they can put artificial legs on me that I really can walk on."

"I'm mighty glad to help," said Glen. "I'd do most anything for folks as good as you."

"There, mother; that's an unsolicited testimonial to your particular brand of goodness," said Will. "He didn't talk a bit that way when he met me first. Acted quite abrupt and seemed to want to get away."

"I didn't know you then," objected Glen. "I was trying to get away from everybody."

"Pretty good horse-power you were putting into it, too," observed Will. "That reminds me, boy. It is now time for you to unroll the full history of your eventful career."

"There isn't very much that matters, until a few days ago," began Glen.

"What's that?" asked Mrs. Spencer. "Did you say not much that matters? How old are you?"

"I was fifteen last May."

"Fifteen years ago last May! Don't you know, Glen, that something happened then that mattered a wonderful lot to one person, even if it didn't then matter much to you. And it's been mattering ever since, to her."

"Yes," agreed Glen, "my mother, you mean."

"Yes, I mean your mother. And your father, too, as long as he lived. Don't you suppose it mattered to them that their boy should be so—" she hesitated, groping for a word.

"Pigheaded!" volunteered Glen.

Mrs. Spencer looked shocked, and remonstrated: "Why, Glen! I didn't say anything of the kind—wayward was the word I wanted."

But Jolly Bill clapped his hands in cheerful applause.

"Good boy, Glen!" he exclaimed. "Pigheaded is the word. Bound to have your own way. Bound to have what you want. No self restraint at all. If you want it, nothing will do but you must have it, good or bad. Believe me, boy, that's the very word."

"I wish you wouldn't interrupt me, Willie," objected Mrs. Spencer. "I wasn't trying to preach a sermon to Glen and I don't know why you should. What I want to tell him is that every little thing about a boy matters to mother. It's always important to her what he does, and if he does wrong to-day she is sure that he certainly will do better to-morrow. Mother's going to be awfully glad when she hears about you, Glen, and I want you to tell me where I can write to her

this very day. Now, go on and tell us about running away."

Glen was interrupted occasionally.

"Oh, did you say Gates?" cried Mrs. Spencer. "Was it Jonathan Gates?"

"I believe I did hear his wife call him Jonathan once or twice, though mostly they all called him 'Father.'"

"It must be they," said Mrs. Spencer. "They're just the people to take care of a boy that way. We know the Gateses very well and they're the salt of the earth. I wonder you ever had the heart to leave them."

Glen told why he had left and then related his further adventures with J. Jervice, his final escape, and his day of dread lest he should be apprehended.

"I think I can tell you why Mr. J. Jervice didn't send after you," said Will. "It's been his busy day. I just read about it in the evening paper. Excepting that it was funny I wondered what excuse they had for giving it so much space. But I now see why it is important. Look at this!"

He handed Glen the paper folded back to a column headed: "Peddler in Wrong Pew."

"Every good citizen knows of the new license

ordinance but not every peddler. One came briskly to the county clerk's office this morning. He was not too rushed to stop and sell a patent tie clip to a man at the door.

"'I'm a traveling merchant,' said he to our genial county clerk.

"'Very good,' said the clerk. 'I see you are doing a little business.'

"'Pretty fair,' agreed Mr. Peddler. 'But that ain't what—'

"'Hold on a bit,' interrupted the clerk. 'First thing is a license.'

"'I've got something more important, just now,' urged the peddler. 'I want to tell you about—'

"'First things first,' persisted our efficient clerk. 'You must pay a license to peddle in this county.'

"'But I don't want to peddle now. I want to lodge—'

"'One thing at a time. You may lodge longer than you want if you break our ordinances. Get your license. Five dollars!'

"'But I don't want a license. I want to give information—'

"'No, no! You want to get information' (our clerk is just bound to have his way). 'You should

have information about our new license fee. Every peddler must pay it.'

"'I'll not pay it. Five dollars is more'n I could make in a whole day, and I don't aim to be in your county that long. I'll go on.'

"'Too late. You've made one sale that we know of. Five dollars or—'

"'I can't, Mister. I can't pay that. You just forget about it an' I'll tell you how we can divide ten dollars, easy money.'

"'Trying to bribe a county officer! That's worse and worse. Here, Mr. Sheriff, you'd better look after this man.'

"The man's name was J. Jervice and he found five dollars in his clothing before the sheriff had fully clamped his grip. He went away in great wrath, taking with him not only the objectionable license but also the valuable secret which was worth ten dollars—easy money.

"The honest merchant who has a regular route does not object to the license. The objections come from these itinerant peddlers, who claim that they are just passing through. Our county officers will insist upon payment. They do not fear to discourage their visits for these fly-by-nights are the very men who cheat our citizens, sometimes stealing under guise of a sale and some-

times stealing outright. We do not say that this peddler looked suspicious, but we observed our sheriff taking a good mental picture of him."

"Good-by, Mr. J. Jervice," exulted Glen, as he laid down the paper. "I don't care if I never meet you again."

"But I'm not sure that you won't," said Jolly Bill, with a purpose to tease. "Now that Mr. Jervice has had to pay a five dollar license fee, all because he loved you so and wanted to see you safe home, he'll be apt to look for you."

"He'd better not come near this house," declared Mrs. Spencer, energetically. "I'll give him a piece of my mind if I see him, I can tell you."

"I surely hope he'll come," said Jolly Bill. "He deserves all he can get."

But neither Jolly Bill, Mrs. Spencer nor Glen were to be gratified with a sight of Mr. Jervice immediately, although they were by no means through with him.

Later in the evening after Glen had given Mrs. Spencer very efficient aid in helping her crippled son to his bed on the ground floor, she showed the boy up to a cozy little bedroom where he was to spend the night.

"Have a good night, son," she said. "I'm so glad you are going to help my boy, because you

look like a boy with grit and determination, and I'll feel safe about him with you looking after him. It means a lot to us just now. It isn't so much that I care about the money, although Willie insists that I must have this home all clear of debt. But the main thing with me is to see my boy able to take care of himself. There's a place in New York where they can operate on him and then fix him up so he can walk all by himself. All we need is the money. It will be such a joy to me. Good night!"

CHAPTER V

TREACHEROUS INDIANS AT BUFFALO LAKE

IT was a couple of days later before Mr. William Spencer (sometimes known to his fellow citizens as Jolly Bill) fully explained to Glen the method by which he hoped to increase their fortunes. He had taken Glen into his home, had fed and provided for him and had given him some clothing. An automobile had brought them the twenty miles of their journey, early that morning, and had left them with their belongings at the house of a farmer, with whom Spencer was evidently on the best of terms. Now they stood on a knoll overlooking what seemed to Glen to be nothing but an immense field of growing corn.

"There is our fortune," said Spencer.

"That field of corn?" asked Glen.

"That is Buffalo Hollow and I repeat that there lies our fortune."

"And how are we to get it?"

"That is your job. That's why I brought you."

"What do you expect me to do. Take a spade and dig?"

"Perhaps! We shall see. Sit down while I

tell you about this place. Buffalo Mound, over there, is the highest ground in this country. From its summit you can see into six counties. This big field before us is Buffalo Hollow. When I was a little chap I was told a great story about this by an old Indian. He said that years ago the Hollow was a beautiful lake fed by springs from Buffalo Mound. Some freighters carrying bullion camped here and were slaughtered by Indians. To hide the bullion until they could dispose of it they threw it in the lake. When they returned they could not find it readily, so they dammed the springs and drained the lake. Makes quite a romantic story, doesn't it?"

"Yes, but did it ever happen?"

"I believe there is some record of such a thing, but my private opinion is that the draining was done by some stingy owner who had little use for a lake and thought he saw an opportunity to secure twenty acres of good bottom land. Probably he thought he was a great economist. But as a matter of fact he did a very foolish thing. This prairie country is poverty stricken so far as lakes and woods are concerned. In the town I live in there are many wealthy men who take their families long distances every summer in order to reach a lake. A twenty acre lake is

only a pool in the lake country, but out here it is worth more than a gold mine."

"And you think if you could make it a lake again you could sell it to these wealthy people?"

"I know I could. I know an athletic club in town that would pay a big price for it. There are many of our wealthy men who would pay five hundred dollars for a hundred foot frontage, so that they might put up bungalows for summer residences. My plan is to find those choked springs, bring them again into their old channels, and convert the Hollow into a lake. Mr. Ryder, our farmer friend who now owns this farm, doesn't think much of my plan, and won't have anything to do with it any more than to sell me options on the land and the privilege of cutting this excellent stand of corn, and that is as far as my arrangements with him extend."

"And what is the first thing for me to do?" asked Glen.

"Excellent talk, that, my boy. What would you advise as to the first thing."

"I suppose you can't do much exploring while the corn stands. It should be cut."

"It should, and it must be cut in the old fashioned way. Did you ever cut corn in the old fashioned way?"

"You mean with a corn-knife. I helped cut a hundred acres at the school last fall."

"Well, there's only about five acres of this land in corn so the contract is smaller. The first thing is to borrow a corn-knife of our friend Ryder."

Glen's attack upon the field of corn began that very day. A year ago, at the reform school, he had hated this work; now, he enjoyed it. The corn was higher than his head, and the heavy stalks, piled on his left arm as he cut with his right, wore through his shirt and made an attempt upon his skin, but he did not complain. He was doing a work into which his heart entered, and so he was enjoying it.

Spencer could give no help at all. There are people, with like misfortune to his, who are able to make some sort of a shift with crutches, but Will could not use them at all. As Mrs. Spencer had explained to Glen, there had been some trouble in the amputation. All that was needed was money to go to a famous hospital and have things properly arranged and a pair of artificial legs fitted that would enable him to walk, run, race, dance or play the pipe organ. Will hoped to be successful enough to command the money for this and meantime he intended to be happy in the prospect. So he sat and watched Glen

work, made suggestions, cracked jokes and drew diagrams of the surrounding country.

The day that Glen finished his work was very hot. He had been working hard in the hope of completing the job by nightfall and was wet and grimy with perspiration and dirt. As he carried an armful of stalks to the shock he noticed a boy standing there dressed in a khaki uniform of olive drab.

"Wouldn't you like a little help?" asked the boy.

"I could use some," said Glen. "But I have only one knife."

"You rest, then, and let me use it awhile. I know how to cut corn."

"You'll spoil your pretty suit."

"This kind doesn't spoil. It's a scout uniform."

"Perhaps it won't spoil for as long as you'll work," said Glen. "What are you doing here?"

"We have a camp around the other side of the Mound. We only came yesterday or you would have seen some of us before now."

He was cutting cornstalks with a practised hand and Glen decided that he could trust him.

"You can go ahead for awhile. I'll go over and see what my partner says," he agreed.

"There's a boy scout over there," he told Spencer. "He wanted to help cut a piece, so I let him. Do you mind?"

"Not a bit. I'd like to get a whole troop of boy scouts to help. They ought to be some good at our game."

"There is a troop of them camped the other side of the mound, this boy says. Maybe we could get them to help."

Spencer straightened himself in his seat.

"Bright idea, Glen. To-night you shall push Jolly Bill and the old billy-cart over there, and we'll give them a chance to do a good turn."

Glen went back to where the scout was working.

"That's enough," he said. "You've given me quite a rest. We're coming over to see you to-night."

"I hope you will," the scout replied. "My father is the scout master and I know he'll be glad to have you come. His name is Newton."

"I suppose you get along with the same name?" suggested Glen.

"I surely do. And my other name is Corliss, but the fellows call me Apple."

"Why's that. Is it your round face and red cheeks?"

"No. I couldn't help looking that way and the

boys wouldn't throw it up to me. No, sir; they started to call me Core, then Apple-core, and so down to Apple."

"It's a good name for you," said Glen. "Did I tell you I'd be bringing my partner over this evening, too?"

"He's welcome. It's in our articles, you know. 'A scout is friendly.'"

"Well, don't forget to ask him to tell some stories. Then you'll be glad we came."

"We'll be glad, anyway," said Apple, politely, as he turned away. When Glen learned to know him better he found this sunny cheer and gentle courtesy to be characteristic of him at all times and places.

It was no easy job to propel the old "billy-cart" over the fields, but Glen managed it. The scouts were just getting together for their evening camp-fire. They were all attracted by the queer vehicle and its jolly occupant and cheerfully and noisily responded to the introductions given by Apple Newton. Mr. Newton, the scout master, was just such a gentleman as one might expect Apple to have for a father and cordially welcomed both Spencer and Glen to their fellowship.

A hint from Apple Newton that Mr. Spencer was a teller of stories drew forth a wild clamor

from the boys for his services. His first story, a funny one, brought forth delirious applause—a "side-splitter" they voted it. Then he told them a story of adventure which held them spell-bound. They clamored yet for more.

"Only one," stipulated the scout master. "It will soon be time to turn in."

"Then I will tell you a short story about this country, but I cannot vouch for its truth. First I must tell you that I grew up a mile or two from here. There are still some Pottawatomie Indians here occasionally, I saw one yesterday. When I was a small boy there was quite a colony—a number who never had gone onto the reservation. I knew some of the old men pretty well and one of them used to tell me stories. The most remarkable story he ever told was the story of Buffalo Lake. Years ago the place now known as Buffalo Hollow was a twenty acre lake. Lakes of any size are so rare in this country that even one of twenty acres is sure to be preserved in tradition, so there is plenty of record to verify this part of his story. The remainder may be true. He insisted that it was.

"It was late in the evening of a hot day. The freighters had been pushing along their tired horses for the last three hours, with their eyes

steadfastly set on a clump of trees ahead—probably this clump in which we sit. When they reached the trees they no longer needed them for shade, for the sun had already set, but they were none the less glad of their leafy branches, glad of the green grass, glad of the cooling waters of the lake. They could scarcely restrain their tired but eager animals from plunging in as they were, and dragging their loads along, and once the harness was released the beasts made a wild dash for the water and reveled in its coolness. The men themselves lost no time in stripping off their clothing and taking the first swim of their trip. They swam and larked and sported until they were not only refreshed and rested but actually tired again. Then they ate a plentiful supper, spread their blankets around the treasure wagons and soon slept the sleep of exhaustion. Even the watch slept, for he, too, had borne the burden of the day and worn himself with the frolic of the evening. He felt no need of special caution for they were now in territory considered safe.

"But the Indians had been following them for many days, eager for such an opportunity. They dreaded as well as hated these plainsmen. They had not dared to attack them on the open prairie.

But now, one dark form after another slipped noiselessly from tree to tree, and very soon every tree sheltered a savage form and made cover for the marksmanship of an Indian brave in feathers and war-paint.

"I don't dare to tell you the rest of this story as the old Pottawatomie told it to me, for it is near bedtime and these are the very trees between which the ghostly, ghastly figures flitted in the darkness. It is all past and gone now and you need have no fear. You boys on the outer edge who are crowding up to the light of the campfire are just as safe as the fellows in the middle. The thing to interest you is what the Indians did with the bullion, after they had massacred its guardians.

"There is a government record that such a massacre actually occurred and that the bullion has never been recovered. The old Indian said that being unable to take the treasure away they rowed it out in the lake and buried it in its waters. They were chased out of the country and it was years before they dared to venture back. Then they tried to regain the treasure but without success. As a final measure they dammed up the springs and drained the lake. But the

treasure was not there and so far as known it has never been found. What has become of it!"

A moment of deep silence followed.

"Supposing they didn't put it in the lake at all? Supposing they hid it in a cave?"

It was Apple Newton who spoke and his speaking was the signal for a perfect babel of suggestions and guesses.

Spencer held up his hand for silence.

"I did not come here to search for this bullion; but I feel sure that it did exist and that it may exist yet. Your scout master has invited me to stay with you for a week. I will tell you all that I know about the country, and you will help me as much as possible in getting about. We will hunt for this treasure. I try to be generous, so I will say that the scout finding it may keep it."

"I have a word to add," said Mr. Newton. "In this treasure hunt we must have system. Every scout desiring to enter will choose the section which he thinks most favorable, draw a map of it and present it for our approval. Afterwards he will give a full report of all his actions, how he has gone to work and what he has noted."

And then came a third speaker who had been expected by no one. He stepped from behind a tree, and to the eyes of the boys he was tall and

erect and to some of their eyes he wore feathers and war-paint.

"Boys hunt gold! Boys hunt heap stone!" he said and disappeared.

CHAPTER VI

GETTING ACQUAINTED

MOST of the boys around the camp fire sat as if petrified for a few moments. Some of them clutched at their scalp locks, as if to make sure of their continued existence.

The first scout to show real signs of recovery was a thin, lanky, freckled-faced hero of unheroic appearance, who spoke in a jerky fashion peculiarly his own.

"Help!" he cried. "Help! Mother! Why'd my pa let me come to this wild place? Injuns! Robbers! Help!"

"Oh, shut up, Chick-chick," cried a small boy. "You'll have 'em coming back."

A contemptuous laugh came from a big, handsome boy who sat in the middle of the circle—big and handsome, yet with a supercilious look.

"Never mind, kid," he assured the little fellow. "You are safe enough here. Chick-chick can't help having hysterics, but you're safe while I'm here."

"Sure, you're safe," echoed Chick-chick. "Ev'body's safe. Matty will protect you. Matty protects whole camp. Go after heap big Injun. Matty. Jes' disappeared northwest by south."

"That's enough from you, Chick-chick," retorted the handsome scout, Matt Burton, who did not bear chaffing cheerfully. "I could go after that Indian if I cared to. And get him, too."

"Why should anyone want to go after him," interrupted Apple Newton. "He's done nothing but suddenly appear and give some information that may be valuable."

"He just came up from nowhere," said a scout. "I don't believe he's a real Indian at all—just a spirit."

"He was right close to me," declared Chick-chick. "I smelled the spirits."

"Maybe he is a phantom Indian. I've heard of such things," said Apple Newton, ignoring Chick-chick's absurd remark. "I think it would be fine to have a phantom come purposely to get us started on the right track for the treasure hunt. 'Hunt heap stone' was what he said. We shall have to look for peculiar formations of stone."

"Maybe we'll find one that has a letter under

it telling where to dig," eagerly suggested one of the younger ones.

"Likely thing," said another. "How long would a letter stand the weather? There'll be marks cut in the stone if there's anything."

"Much you fellows know about Indian ways," boasted Matt Burton. "What did those Indians know about our language. Indians talk by signs and numbers. It will take a smart fellow to tell what it means when you find your heap stone."

"Don't worry, fellows. When you find it hike back an' ask Matty. He'll tell you."

Matty was saved from delivering his angry response, for just then "taps" sounded. The scout master demanded prompt attention to all camp signals. It was understood that after taps there was to be no noise, no unnecessary conversation. All was to be quiet and orderly.

Mr. Newton would not hear of Glen pushing Jolly Bill back to the farm house.

"We have an empty tent with two cots and bedding too—left here by members who were called home. You turn right in with us. We are glad to have you—both of you. I think we'll make Glen a scout."

This invitation suited both of them splendidly. Spencer was pleased, and, as for Glen, he had

never experienced anything so gratifying in his life. He was so excited that he could not sleep for some time, but lay on his comfortable cot thinking of the many happenings of the last few eventful days, and especially of the exciting story of the camp fire, and the dramatic appearance of the Indian. He was glad that he was here to help his good friend, Jolly Bill, but he felt that it would be much more glorious to help him by finding bars of bright, glistening bullion, than by looking for a lost lake.

Glen was still dreaming of Indians when the bugle call aroused him, and he awakened to the glorious activities of a summer morning in a scout camp. Two scouts were in the tent almost before he had hopped out of his blankets and into his clothes.

"We came to help our friend, Mr. Spencer," explained Apple Newton.

"Want to wind up his machine an' put on some funny story records," added Chick-chick.

"I can't tell funny stories before breakfast," objected Jolly Bill. "I'm hungry enough to eat Indian."

"We have eggs for breakfast—fresh laid. We got 'em from the farmer yesterday."

"You're sure they're fresh?" asked Spencer.

"I'm very particular about my eggs since I camped out a few years ago. One of our fellows wasn't much good about cooking, but he said he'd get the eggs. He came back pretty soon with a whole dozen. 'You're sure these are fresh?' I asked him. 'Dead positive' said he. So I started to break one into my pan, and about all there was that was still egg was the shell. 'What made you so positive these eggs were fresh?' I asked that chap after I let him come to a little. 'I could have sworn to it,' he said. 'I lifted the hen right off the nest myself and the eggs were warm yet.' "

"Our eggs aren't laid by the dozen," said Apple, "and we know they're fresh because the farmer said so. Come on now, if you're ready. The scout master says we're to push your automobile right up to the end of the table, next to him."

It was a jolly crowd at the table, and no less jolly was the squad acting that morning as waiters. The scout master believed it good discipline to teach every scout how to do the humblest duty as well as how to do the greatest, so each scout took his turn at waiting on table. Patrol leader Matt Burton was in charge of the waiter squad this morning. He was the one exception who

showed that it did not agree well with every scout to do these menial tasks. He considered them beneath his dignity and never would have condescended to them had there been a way of escape. Since there was not, he had made the best of a bad job, and as he was very bright and a natural leader he had managed to reach the rank of Patrol Leader in spite of his disinclination to certain matters of work.

"Bob said he had a special order for Mr. Spencer, Matt," said Apple, stepping to his side after he had wheeled the cart up to the table. "Tell him Mr. Spencer wants his eggs sure fresh and likes 'em soft."

"You can just carry Mr. Spencer's order to Black Bob yourself," said Matt disgustedly. "I'm no waiter."

"You won't be if the scout master hears you," said Apple, his good nature exhausted. "You'll be a traveler."

"He surely will," observed Chick-chick. "I'll take care of Mr. Spencer, Apple. Leave him to me."

"It's more in your line," insinuated Matt. "I guess it's about the same thing as waiting on your father's customers at his garage."

"An' it's proud I am to do it," retorted Chick-

chick. "I do it whenever they want anything I can handle, from gasoline to a new machine. Lem'me sell you a new car, Matty. Lem'me sell you one that'll make your blue blood bubble all over itself. Tell ye 'bout it jest as soon as I get those eggs."

"We've just bought a new car," said Matt. "And I'd walk before I'd let my folks buy one of you, anyway."

"I don't believe that fellow likes you," observed Glen, as he went up to the cook shack with Chick-chick.

"He surely don't disgrace himself by too much show of affection," agreed Chick-chick. "You musn't think it's because it's me, though. There's on'y one person Matty really loves. He's real smart, Matty is. You noticed he spoke so the men couldn't hear him."

Black Bob had Mr. Spencer's eggs all ready.

"These is for the ge'mman as told the stories last night," he announced. "He sure is quality, if they ain't much to him."

"Give 'em to me, Bob," said Chick-chick. "I'm going to wait on Mr. Spencer."

"You go away, you Henry Chicken," objected Black Bob. "I know all 'bout yore tricks. Bear

Patrol is waitin' table dis yere mohnin' an' you ain't no Bear Patrol."

"Well, here's Goosey," exclaimed Chick-chick, grabbing the shoulder of a small scout who had just appeared. "Goosey is in Bear Patrol, and he's a friend of mine, ain't you, Goosey?"

"I surely am," declared the small scout. "Anything I can do for Chick-chick I do."

"Hustle these eggs down to Mr. Spencer, Goosey, an' make it your business to wait on him. Bob won't give me a thing."

"Not when you ain't on duty. Oh, I know you, Mr. Henry-chick," Bob affirmed.

"Bob doesn't seem to trust you," said Glen. "Aren't you friendly?"

"Just best friends ever. Bob hasn't better friend 'n me in camp. I like Bob 'n I love his cakes an' pies. 'Tain't my fault if he doesn't always seem to reciprocate, is it, Bob?"

"What dat 'bout recipe fo cake? Nev' you min', Mister Henry-chick. I knows you, I do."

Bob shook a fist as he spoke, but the chuckle in his voice and the laugh in his eye were more apparent than the threat in his fist.

"Well, let's go back an' get ours while they're hot," said Chick-chick. "Goosey'll wait on Mr.

Spencer. Good boy, Goosey. Goin' do something good for Goosey some day."

He led Glen back to the long table of smooth boards laid on trestles which stood on the grassy level. The scouts were helping themselves from great bowls filled with eggs cooked in the shell, or from large platters on which eggs fried or poached were served, according to their preference. Bob was a good cook and gave them their choice. Glen, with an appetite that cared little for the fine points of preference, chose impartially from every dish that reached him. An occasional glance showed that the small scout known as Goosey was giving good attention to Jolly Bill, and not only he but Apple Newton and other scouts were endeavoring eagerly to anticipate his wants.

Glen was mentally putting the fellows in their proper places on the shelves of his esteem. Apple Newton and the boy called Chick-chick he warmed to most particularly, and they were given prominent places. He liked young Goosey, as well as several other of the younger boys whose names he had not learned. There was a big fellow called Tom Scoresby that he believed that he would get along with pretty well. Just one scout he found no room for anywhere. That was Matt Burton.

He hated him, he was quite sure. His unruly young heart only had one desire for Matt. He wanted just one good chance to measure strength with him and plant his hard, clenched fist right where that smile of insolence curled the handsome lips.

Quite engrossed in his thoughts Glen did not notice that the boys around him had risen from the long bench on which they sat. Suddenly he heard Matt Burton's voice behind him.

"Get up," he said. "Can't you see that we want these places for the waiters."

Glen slowly and deliberately turned around in his seat and looked at his questioner.

"Who are you?" he asked, and his voice was so aggressive that every scout in hearing distance turned to see what was up.

"You'll find out who I am," replied Matt angrily. "Get up when I tell you."

"I don't have to get up when you tell me, nor lie down when you tell me, nor do anything when you tell me. Did you get that? What now?"

Matt was getting very angry but he did not entirely forget his position.

"If I call my patrol you'll get up mighty quick," he said. "I'd like to know who let you come here, anyway."

"Never mind about your patrol and don't fuss about who let me come here. You come and make me get up, all by yourself."

Matt looked at the brown skin and the strong tough features of the obstinate boy a long minute, as if making up his mind.

"Oh, well," he said, "I suppose if you're a guest you must do as you please."

"Since you're so nice about it," said Glen, "the seat's yours. Do what you want with it."

Glen knew in his heart that there would be a clash with Matt Burton if he stayed long in that camp. He felt also that he had not come out of this first brush with entire distinction. Matt had been in the wrong and had shown that he was angry, yet he had a certain discipline which had enabled him to control his temper, and the issue had ended in defeat for the undisciplined waif who might well have been victorious had they come to blows.

CHAPTER VII

GLEN IS INITIATED

STRANGE to say, with the passing of the morning, Glen found himself unhappy, though he should have been abundantly content. Strange, for with all these boys to help, his tasks would be greatly lightened, and to join in the fun of this crowd should be joy beyond compare. But Glen did not want fun just now. There was something much more precious to him, which he felt in danger of losing, and although he himself could not have explained its substance, it was none the less real. It was the trust and dependence of Will Spencer. For the first time in his life Glen had been really trusted and really needed by some one. He had taken up the burden like a man and rejoiced in it. Now he felt that his opportunities would be dissipated among the crowd.

"What's the matter, Glen?" asked Spencer. "Why are you moping around with a face like the reverse side of a frying-pan? You ought to be right out with the bunch, egging 'em on."

"Oh, I guess no one has any use for me," said Glen disconsolately. "I guess I might as well go back to the school."

"To the school! And leave me in the lurch?"

"You don't need me any more. You don't tell me anything."

"What haven't I told you, boy?"

"Well, you were telling Apple all about that Indian who came last night, but you didn't tell me."

"Oh, nonsense, boy. You are peeved too easily. That Indian was just old Joe Marrowfat, who had followed me up from the farm. Apple is romantic and he wanted a string of stuff about the noble red man's noble antecedents. I need you, all the time, to be the mainspring of this business."

"Tell me what I can do and I'm only too glad to get at it."

"Well, for one thing you must mix with the boys. Be jolly with 'em. 'Laugh and the world laughs with you.' That's my motto. That's the way I get along. Someone must be around with these boys to keep 'em going, or their hunt won't last long. Get them interested in finding the location of the springs. To-day they are all looking for big stones because of what Joe said. There's enough big stones around here to keep them busy.

Tell them the fellow who finds the treasure may get some gold but the boy who finds a spring gets twenty dollars sure. Get them to survey the Hollow and search for marks to show where the old stream used to run in. You ought to be up on your toes every minute. I'm sorry you aren't a scout."

"Perhaps I could be," suggested Glen.

"Why not? Get Apple to teach you the knots and the scout law, and I'll teach you the rest. I'll speak to the scout master and see if they won't initiate you to-night."

The remainder of the day Glen was too busy to mope. When the camp fire came he was at hand as a candidate for tenderfoot initiation which the scout master had agreed to give. Mr. Newton had ideas of his own about initiation ceremonies. He believed in making them interesting and impressive to candidate and scouts alike, and he devised a new ceremony of initiation for special occasions.

This occasion was unusual, for since none but scouts came to camp, initiations were not needed. It was also unusual in being conducted in the open, which was necessary because the camp had no assembly tent. Mr. Newton was glad of the diversion, for the day had been very sultry, a

storm threatened, and many of the scouts were afflicted with that uneasy, depressed feeling which seems to be absorbed from the atmosphere at such times.

"All scouts on tent duty," he announced after supper. "Rain threatens. See that trenches are clear. Slacken tent ropes a little, especially where they are new. See that nothing in the tents touches the walls. Have your beds all ready to turn in. You will then all assemble at the camp-fire for initiation ceremonies."

The camp had lanterns and one or two oil torches but Mr. Newton preferred to go back to nature for his light at this ceremony. The night was cool as the storm drew near, and the camp-fire was allowed to flare up in a crackling blaze which spread its light over the wide open circle and threw mysterious shadows among the big trees beyond.

Mr. Newton took his stand with his back to a massive elm at the edge of the circle.

"The candidate may present himself," he announced; and Glen marched out and stood before him, with much more of a feeling of solemnity than he had felt on occasions when he had stood before persons of far greater authority.

"Who desires to bear the lights which shall

lighten the way of this candidate as he enters the mysteries of scoutcraft?" called the scout master.

"We desire to bear the lights," came simultaneously from two of the tallest scouts. They stepped to the fire, selected each a blazing torch and ranged themselves under the tree.

"Who is sponsor for this candidate?" was the next question.

"I, First class scout Corliss Newton, am his sponsor," proclaimed Apple, stepping forward, his pleasant eyes alight with earnest gravity.

"It is well. The sponsor may take his stand to the candidate's left. Who desires to bear the scout law to this applicant."

Twelve scouts arose as one—the older scouts they were—those not likely to be confused by bashfulness or to spoil the ceremony by their own self-consciousness.

"Let the bearer administer article I. A scout is trustworthy!"

Forth strode a scout bigger than Glen. Laying his hand on Glen's lips, he said: "No lies proceed from trustworthy lips, no deceit from trustworthy tongue, he lives by the breath of honor and his lips are sealed to all but words of truth."

"The bearer of article 2. A scout is loyal!"

This scout bore aloft the flag of the camp, which

had been requisitioned for the purpose. He placed the staff in Glen's hands as he said: "Loyal to the flag and to all it represents. Loyal to all scouts and all officials. Loyal to home, to parents and authorities, and loyal to Almighty God."

The wind was swirling through the branches of the trees now and the few stars which had shone were blotted out by the clouds, but the initiation proceeded.

"The bearer of article 3. A scout is helpful!"

This bearer, coming forward, took Glen's hands and raised them up as he recited: "These hands and the body they represent are pledged to lift up righteousness and tear down iniquity. They will do at least one good turn to somebody every day."

"The bearer of article 4. A scout is friendly!"

Glen was glad to see Chick-chick coming forward with a cheerful grin on his face. He stood between Glen and Apple and around the shoulders of each he placed an arm, while he and Apple shouted aloud: "All friends! All brothers!" And immediately every scout rose to his feet and together they echoed: "Brothers all!"

But the first rain drops were spatting among the leaves and Scout Master Newton raised his hand.

"We must abbreviate our ceremony," he announced. "The remaining bearers will repeat their sections of the scout law after me as I read. The twelve will then form an inner circle around us, and all other scouts will make strong our defenses with an outer circle as we give this candidate the scout oath."

In their order the remaining eight advanced with their salutations:

A scout is courteous.
A scout is kind.
A scout is obedient.
A scout is cheerful.
A scout is thrifty.
A scout is brave.
A scout is clean.
A scout is reverent.

They formed the inner circle and around them all the scouts arose and joined hands to form the outer guard. The lightning became more vivid in its flashes and the mutterings of thunder changed to rumbling and roaring as they stood there. The big drops of rain began to thicken but they paid no heed.

"The candidate will hold up his right hand, palm to the front, thumb resting on the nail of the little finger, and the other three fingers up-

right and together, which constitutes the scout sign."

Glen stood at attention with his hand raised as directed.

"The candidate will now repeat after me the scout oath."

" 'On my honor I will do my best:

" 'To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the scout law;

" 'To help other people at all times;

" 'To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.'

"Scout you are now admitted into our ranks as a tenderfoot, which is our first step and one from which you may go on to acquire merit and honor. We are brothers all. The skies may be heavy above us, the storms may threaten, the thunder roar and the lightning flash but we extend to you the cheer of scout fellowship and the welcome of scout comradeship. And as you meet the inevitable storms of life we believe that your remembrance of this law and oath will help you to weather them all triumphantly."

The rain was beginning to fall in earnest now.

"Dismiss troop!" called the scout master; and the boys, a second before in impressive order, made a wild scramble for their tents. Glen ran

to the assistance of Will Spencer, who had been an interested spectator of the ceremony, seated in his "billy-cart" at the edge of the circle, but Mr. Newton waved him to his tent.

"I will look after this man," he declared. "He is my guest and I am rain proof."

Glen turned into his blankets that night a Boy Scout of America. He awoke to a sunny morning and discovered that he was still Glen Mason. Almost the first thing, he was in trouble with his patrol leader, Matt Burton. It is only fair to Glen to say that Burton's treatment was of a character sure to antagonize a boy of Glen's nature. From the first there had been a feeling of ill-will between them, a feeling that had been manifest in looks and silent expressions as well as in one sharp interchange of words. Now, to Glen's disgust, he found himself assigned to Burton's patrol, and the very first work for which he was detailed was that of camp cleaning.

Glen went at his detail with poor spirit; picking up old papers, fragments, trash of every kind, a hateful work to him. Perhaps he would have made open rebellion but for Apple Newton, who though not in the same patrol was helping in the work.

"Get busy at it, Glen," Apple counseled. "It

isn't a ten minute job if you hustle. Beats washing dishes all to pieces. Every scout has to take his turn. Get busy."

But, filled with the thought that Burton had put him to this work to humiliate him, Glen did not carry through his task to great advantage. He was glad that the morning swim came immediately after, and glad to be able to make a cleaner dive and a longer swim than Burton, who was himself among the best. Therein lay the trouble, Glen was a born leader, and although his opportunities for leading had been few he was quick to assert himself. Burton was also a leader and one who had been given ample opportunity. Neither boy had yet learned that the first element in leadership is the ability to serve; neither had learned that the greatest leader is the one who counts no service too mean for his personal attention.

When the treasure hunt began there were no further restrictions for the morning, and Glen's spirit was rejoiced at Apple's invitation that he bear him company. The sunny-faced, open-hearted boy won the love of everyone, but in Glen Mason he had stirred a real worship.

"We'll have to call you something, Glen," he said. "Your name's all right, but the boys are

sure to name you over so we may as well do it now. Let's ask Chick-chick. He's good at names."

"What's his real name?" asked Glen.

"His real name is Henry Henry. His father liked Henry so well for a surname that he had him christened Henry, too. We began by calling him Hen Hen, but that didn't go very well so we call him Chick-chick."

"I don't mind s'long as y' don't call me Biddy chick," explained Chick-chick, who had just come up. "Now what kind o' Mason are you—Stonemason, Brickmason or Mason Fruit Jar."

"Brick's the best," declared Apple. "Matches his hair, too. Let's call him Brick."

"Right it is. Brick for Mason. Where ye goin' to find treasure?"

"You can come along, Chick. We're going to look for signs of water-courses running into the Hollow."

"I won't come, then. I'm going with Goosey to look for a heap rock. We're after gold, we are."

All the morning the two boys explored the Hollow. Many times they traced deceptive depressions in the earth's surface which gave some intimation of having served at some time as a water-

way, but never was there any reward for their efforts. At noon, hot and dusty, they made their way back to the camp. A great group of excited boys stood there gesticulating and shouting, and in the center of the group stood Matt Burton.

"What's the excitement?" asked Apple of the first boy they reached.

"Excitement isn't the word," he replied. "Matt Burton has found the treasure!"

CHAPTER VIII

MATT BURTON'S TREASURE FIND

WHEN they heard the remarkable news that Matt Burton had discovered the treasure the curiosity of the two boys was beyond measure. They were pushing their way eagerly toward the group to get the full news when a running noose dropped from the overhanging limb of a great tree and neatly entwined them. Their progress was checked.

"That's Chick-chick," said Apple, without looking up. "He's always playing some kind of a trick. Let go your hold of that rope, Chick-chick."

The joker dropped down from the branch almost on top of them.

"I was just fixing a swing when ye came 'long," he explained, in his jerky fashion. "Too good a chance to miss, it was, and worked fine, it did. Don't be in a hurry."

"You loosen this rope and let us go. We want to get the news."

" 'Tain't s' important as you think. Gives the

Great an' Only Matty a chance t' spread himself. Come on to dinner; you'll hear all 'bout it."

Dinner was indeed ready and the boys were filling up the long table, for Mr. Newton had decreed that no action should be taken on Matt's discovery until after dinner.

When all was cleared away and the boys were ready to dismiss he made the announcement: "Burton will now tell us of his discovery; the site he selected, how he has worked and what he has found."

"Rah for the Great and Only," yelled Chick-chick, and, the designated title being popularly known and approved, the "rah" was given before Matt began to speak.

There was no embarrassment about Matt Burton as he rose to speak. He was about fifteen years old, tall, straight and handsome. A mass of dark brown hair with well-set eyes of the same shade and regular features gave vigor to his head and face. He was of good family and had been reared in a home of refinement and taught to feel at ease under all circumstances. He accepted his nickname of "The Great and Only Matty" with some complacency, as being not inappropriate, especially since his pitching was the star feature of their baseball playing. A wise father had sent

him to the scouts to "get acquainted with himself" but so far the process had not reached perfection. He began to talk with a smile of confidence.

"I know a lot about buried treasure from what I've read and heard tell of," said he, "so I decided to work out my own plans. Chick-chick and Goosey offered to come with me, but I had ideas of my own. I knew a few things about how to look. I knew it was no good to look on top of the ground —might as well look up in trees. Then I knew there's always a false scent thrown out to put searchers off the track. I figured that the false scent was probably the story of the lake. So instead of choosing any place in the Hollow I looked around until I found a heap of rock near the timber. And then I chose one hundred feet from the timber line southeast of the Hollow. I knew that the heap of rock wouldn't be the only sign—there's always a second sign given in a treasure hunt. Usually, in all the books I've read, the second sign is a tree or some tall object which casts a shadow at a certain hour of the day at just the point where you ought to dig."

"What hour?" shouted a boy.

"I'm coming to that. I looked around for the rock heap and decided to pace off a hundred feet.

I got no results worth while until I tried it due south. This time it brought me to an old stump of a very peculiar appearance that might have been there a hundred years. It was about ten feet high, and of course the length of its shadow was different at different times of the day. The only guide I had was in the heap of rock. There were four rocks in it. As there is no sun at four o'clock in the morning it was a sure thing that I must choose four in the afternoon. So I waited until four o'clock and at the exact spot where the peculiar knobby head of that stump threw its shadow I commenced to dig."

The boys were listening in strained silence. One of the younger ones squeaked "Rah for Matty!" but drew no response.

"I dug until supper time," continued Matt. "It was hard work, but I made a pretty good hole though I found nothing. Nobody had been around to bother me. I just stuck up a couple of sticks at supper time and came in. This morning I was late getting to work. Digging alone so hard yesterday had taken off some of my appetite, and I didn't dream of what I was going to find so I didn't hurry much. But I found the ground turned up easier and I had hardly dug twenty minutes before my spade struck something that

gave out a metallic ring. I scraped away the dirt until I could see a metal object like the lid of a box about fourteen by eighteen inches. The ground all around it was hard and I could not get it loose. I tried to get my fingers under it but couldn't do it. The dinner call was sounded. I wouldn't have come only I was obliged to have some help anyway, and I thought I'd better tell the scout master all about it and have him see fair play."

"Which the scout master will proceed to do," added Mr. Newton. "We will follow Matt to the scene of his explorations which we hope will turn out to be the treasure, although one box fourteen by eighteen inches would not hold a great deal of bullion. Still there may be other boxes. Who were the boys who wanted to work with you, Matt?"

"Chick-chick and Goosey," replied Matt.

"Very well. You two boys may take a pick and a spade and help Matt get his box out."

The boys did not respond willingly.

"We don't want to," said Chick-chick. "He didn't want us yesterday and he won't want us today. Let Brick Mason and Apple do it."

"I don't like that spirit, Henry, but we'll excuse you. Corliss and Glen will do the work."

"You don't seem very much excited over this find," said Glen to Spencer, as he pushed him along in his billy-cart.

"I'd be more excited if they found a gushing spring, my boy. I don't excite easily over buried gold."

"Well, we'll soon see. If I get hold of that pick I'll soon have that box loose."

Matt Burton did not really relish Glen's aid, but he could offer no valid objection. A few rapid and accurate strokes with the pick loosened the hard earth, and Apple and Matt quickly spaded it out. As soon as a grip could be obtained Matt seized the box. It certainly was heavy, especially since he could not yet get a good grip on it. Apple lifted one side and slowly but with great excitement they brought the mysterious box from its hiding place.

A look of disgust swept the features of Matt Burton as he looked at his treasure and read the white letters on the side of the box.

From the edge of the pit came a roar of laughter from Black Bob, the cook, who had been eagerly watching the proceedings.

"Ah ben missin' that yere bread box since yis'-day two days gone," he shouted. "Dat ah is mah treasure. Bring her up yere!"

Glen, on his knees, had thrown open the lid of the box. As he saw its contents to be damp earth, tightly tamped, his roar of laughter equaled that of Black Bob.

"Wow!" he shouted. "Look at this. The treasure's name is Mud!"

Matt's look of disgust had changed to fiery anger.

"You're the one who put this trick up on me," he shouted. "You've been rubbing me wrong ever since we let you in here from nowhere. Now I'm going to pay you up!"

He made a wild lunge forward at Glen, and in a second the two were locked in a rough and tumble conflict in the narrow confines of the pit. But the scout master reached down from above and seized each by the collar, and Apple valiantly pushed himself in between their belligerent forms.

"Enough of that, boys," said Mr. Newton. "Climb out of that hole. Glen, what have you to say to this charge."

But Glen was spared from making an answer, for Henry Henry stood forth and spoke.

"He didn't do it, Mr. Newton. It was me," confessed Chick-chick, more convincing than grammatical. "Goosey was in it with me. When Matt turned us down yesterday we thought we'd give

him something to dig for. Never dreamed he'd make big blow 'bout it. Just s'posed be little joke all t' himself. We came last night, dug down to hard pan; cut hole s' near exact size o' bread box as we could, made it heavy with dirt and turned it in upside down. Just joke, Mr. Newton."

And as "just a joke" it did not seem so very reprehensible, for a good joke that does no harm is not out of place in a scout camp. Mr. Newton had a private conversation with Henry Henry about his joke, but Chick-chick never told the boys what he said. The scout master also had a private conversation with Matt Burton and this also was kept a secret, but though it may have done Matt good it did not improve his attitude toward "Brick" Mason.

In most things Glen found the succeeding days marked by such happiness as he had never before enjoyed. He was a boy among boys. No one asked about his past. Scouts are taught to live in the present. It is not what they have been, but what they are and are aiming to be that carries weight. He found his word accepted as truth and so he made strong efforts to make it true. He did not spend his days in perfect harmony. The old disposition to have everything his own way still existed and many an angry word flared up

and many times he was near the fighting line, but this had been so much a part of his every day living for so many years that it troubled him but little. Even with Matt Burton he had not come to blows, though Matt continued to assign to him disagreeable tasks, so markedly indeed, that Mr. Newton announced that he would make all assignments himself, henceforth. The treasure hunt proceeded with more or less zest but neither real nor fancied treasure was discovered. Nevertheless it supplied a new interest each day, and Glen enthusiastically did his share in keeping the interest alive. Every part of every day was in vivid contrast to the dull monotonous life he had been living. And yet he was not satisfied, there remained an eager longing for something, he knew not what; a great unsatisfied craving.

Glen was always a sound sleeper. He dreamed of the camp one night. The tussle with Matt Burton had really come, at last. He seemed to do very well at first but Matt had seized a pick-ax (the very one used in unearthing the bread box) and was beating him about the head with it. Fortunately he awoke before he was badly damaged. Spencer was reaching over from his cot and tapping his face with his cane.

"Get up, Brick! Get up! Brick is a good name

for you, my hard-baked friend. Get up! This tent will be in the next county in five minutes. Get up! You would sleep on, and come to no harm if we were carried twenty miles, but being slightly crippled, I'd be sure to struggle and get hurt. Get up!"

The wind was blowing furiously and the tent almost capsized. Glen was out of bed in a flash, wide awake. He knew where to get a heavy hammer and made short work of driving home the stakes and securing the flapping canvas.

"Not very clever of you to plant your tent stakes so the first strong wind would blow them out of the ground," said Spencer.

"The wind didn't blow them out, and the strain of the ropes didn't pull them out. I fixed those stakes just before I went to bed. Who do you suppose yanked them up?"

"I never was good at riddles," replied Spencer. "Maybe it was Mr. Newton."

"Yes," said Glen, "or Apple! Just like 'em. Try another guess."

"No, I'm afraid I would say something that might excite you. Go to sleep. Every one has troubles, but it's no good weeping about 'em. 'Laugh and the world laughs with you.' "

"I haven't any troubles and I can afford to

laugh," said Glen. "The day's beginning to break but I think I'll take a Sunday morning snooze."

And over in the county into which Will Spencer had predicted they would be blown a man was just awaking from his snooze. He had slept all night in an automobile, as he frequently did. The automobile was no ordinary car. It had a driver's seat in front and a closed car behind. Bright colored letters announced to the world that J. Jervice supplied the public with a full line of novelties, including rugs, curtains, rare laces and Jervice's Live Stock Condition Powders.

Mr. J. Jervice yawned and stretched, and rubbed his eyes.

"I think I'll get on to Buffalo Center to-day," he soliloquized. "The boss didn't say to come until to-morrow an' the rest o' the gang won't be there until night, anyway. That'll give me a chance to do a nice little business at that Boy Scout Camp I hear they've got there. It's Sunday but I reckon I can sell a few things. Ought to get rid of some flags and knives and a little tinware."

It was nice that Glen could feel that he had no troubles, but perhaps he did not know of the intentions of Mr. Jervice.

CHAPTER IX

GLEN ENLISTS

SUNDAY morning in camp. The fierce wind of the night had been succeeded by a restful quiet; the sun shone bright in an atmosphere cooled and freshened by the storm. Glen Mason both felt and saw a difference throughout all the camp on this quiet morning; no one expected noise or bustle; no one projected expeditions or sports; the peaceful rest of a holy day marked the camp in its earliest hours.

Black Bob had cooked his eggs and bacon according to a special formula which he announced as "extra for Sunday," and thereby did he make his contribution to the hallowing of the day. After breakfast was the regular time for announcement of the "order of the day" by the scoutmaster, and for any special remarks, any complaints, any petitions or suggestions.

"We are going to have a good day to-day, boys," said Mr. Newton. "We have had a mighty fine week with our swimming and fishing and hikes, and some of us, too, have found some 'treas-

ure,' if not exactly what we were searching for. This morning, after camp duties, every boy will find a quiet spot apart from any disturbance and write a letter home. Tell the folks how you feel, what you eat, what you do, how you sleep. Tell them about the treasure hunt, tell them about last night's storm. I hope the boy who got something special out of our 'near cyclone' last night will tell his mother about it."

"Who was it?" came a chorus of voices.

"Don't bother about that," replied Mr. Newton. "Perhaps there was more than one."

"I'm not 'shamed of it," piped up Chick-chick. "I'm it. Got Mr. Newton out o' bed, I did, I was s' scared. Always have been scared 'bout wind —born that way. But Mr. Newton says, 'D'ye know who walketh upon the wings of the wind?' An' I said, 'Death'; an' he said, 'God! It's in the hundred an' fourth Psalm.' S' then he said, 'You c'n stay in my tent till the blow is over,' an' I said, 'No. I'll go back to me tent like Christian. With God on the wings I'm safe.' An' as I went back saw Brick Mason outside his tent swingin' hammer, an' I says, 'Ain't ye scared, Brick?' an' he says, 'No. I ain't scared. I'm mad.' An' that's all is to it, 'cept'n 'bout the feller I saw when I first went out."

"Now that's fine, boys," said Mr. Newton. "There's a double victory in that. Don't slight your letters. Make them long and newsy. Remember there will be Sunday School around the long table at ten o'clock. This afternoon a man is coming from town who has been all around the world and has seen the battles of great nations as a war correspondent. He will speak at three o'clock. By special request we will hold our camp-fire to-night at the summit of Buffalo Mound. Every scout will carry an armful of firewood and his blankets, as a part of the plan is to spend the night in a bivouac on mother earth. Now to your letters."

Glen sat looking out of his tent, just out of the glare of the sun. Writing letters home was no novelty to him. At the school you were supposed to do it at least once a month, and for a good letter you got ten merits, but no boy ever wrote what he thought because your letters were all read by the house officer. If he should write a letter home to-day some reform school officer would be inquiring at the camp for him day after to-morrow. But he would write some kind of a letter—it would look queer if he did not, with all the other boys writing. He would write just exactly what he thought, too, for once, and the mere

fact that the letter was never to be mailed need make no difference.

For once (he wrote) I am being treated about right. There is just one chap here doesn't treat me right and his time's coming. But I don't hate him as bad as it seems like I would, and I don't want to get in bad with the scoutmaster so I don't know as I'll do much. The Scoutmaster's a Christian and I've got more use for Christians than I ever had before. Mr. Newton sure treats me fine. Apple's a Christian, he says I ought to be, too, and he's surely a peach. Mr. Gates is a Christian and nobody ever treated me better. The old Supe is a Christian and I guess he would have treated me right if I'd let him. Jolly Bill treats me fine, too, and I don't know why he isn't one but it makes you feel as if him being such a good fellow certainly ought to be. He says laugh and the world laughs with you but it wouldn't have done much good to tell Chick-chick that last night and it wouldn't have made him brave enough to go back to his tent and fight it out. Chick-chick talked right up this morning. He's never said anything about being one before but he's always acted like one—kind of on the square. That's the kind I'm going to be; I mean I would be if ever I got to be one, but I suppose I'd have to go back to the school and I don't know about that. But I'd like to feel like Apple and him, so sure-like and so safe. I think you'd better try to get me a job and maybe I can work under another name. Everybody has to work and I'm going to hold up my end. I wouldn't like to be like that J. Jervice man with his tricks—the man that tried to sell me. I'd tell you all about him but it would take a long time and this letter ain't ever going to be sent, anyway. I'm going to do better than send a letter. Just as soon as it's safe I'm coming to see you and I'm going to fix it so I can earn a living for you and you won't have to work any more. So that's all for this time anyway.

His letter had not been written as easily as it

reads, and all the other boys had finished and were making a clamor for envelopes and stamps, a disturbance in which Glen did not join since his letter was never to be mailed.

He would have tried to escape the afternoon talk, but Will Spencer claimed him.

"Push my old billy-cart right up alongside that speaker," he demanded. "If he's done half they say he has I want to hear him."

So Glen was not only present but in a prominent place where he was bound to hear all that the speaker had to say. And a very interesting narrative it was, though we have no space in this story for anything but the few very last words.

"And so it came about," said the war correspondent, "that after seeing all sorts of soldiers in all manner of warfare, it fell to my lot to see this one brave man holding up his banner against great hordes of invaders in a crowded inland city of China, and he was single-handed. And I was obliged to admit that he was the bravest soldier I had seen; and since the appeal came to me so directly I volunteered. And thus it happened that one who had been a reporter of scenes of carnage turned to write the message of the Cross. And now I am going about enlisting recruits for the army of righteousness and right glad I am

that so many of you are in that army, and right glad I shall be to talk with any of you who need help."

Many of the boys came to say a word to the speaker as they dispersed. Glen stood there, next to Spencer's cart. He would not have said a word had he been threatened with torture, but he was greatly concerned and both his hand and heart throbbed with the hope that some one would respond to the eloquent plea that had stirred him so deeply. When the boys all had gone the response came from the least expected place. It was from Jolly Bill who had lain in his cart in thrilled interest.

"I've half a mind to do it, Glen," he whispered.

"Oh, you must, Bill. It's just the one thing you need," urged Glen, as earnestly as though he were himself an exhorter.

"How is it?" asked Spencer, turning to the speaker. "You would hardly care to enlist half a man, would you?"

"No," said the war correspondent. "We don't care to do things by halves, but we're mighty glad to enlist a whole man like you. Whatever accident you have suffered hasn't cut you off from being a man after God's own heart. Shake hands on that."

"I've been finding it pretty empty to 'Laugh and the world laughs with you,' " admitted Spencer. "It's a hollow laugh a great deal of the time. It doesn't ring true. I want a peace that will help me to have cheer regardless of whether the world laughs with me or at me. I've known it for a long time but this last week especially I've felt the need of the kind of religion Mr. Newton practices."

"It's the same kind that Apple has," ventured Glen.

"It is for you, too," said the war correspondent. "It is for every one who will have it."

"You see, though, you don't know me," said Glen. "I've been a pretty hard case."

"Tell us about it," came the invitation.

His mouth once opened Glen's story came rapidly, and in the glow of confession he held nothing back, but his hearers were neither alienated nor offended.

"There's only one thing about a boy like you," said the speaker. "It isn't how bad you have been. You can't have been so bad but Jesus has cleared your debt. The one thing is, are you through with it all, are you willing to turn away from yourself and enlist under the banner of the cross?"

Glen's face worked with emotion such as he had not felt in many years.

"I don't know what to do," he said, huskily. "I'm all up in the air. I'd like to be a man like what you told about and like these people that have been good to me lately. I'd do it even if I wouldn't like some of the things I'd have to swallow. But I don't understand what I'd have to do. I've never done anything of the kind."

"You're a good deal like the soldier enlisting, son. He doesn't understand anything. All he knows is that he wants to enlist himself. And that's all you need to know. Your commander will see to the rest. You won't learn everything in a day. You'll make mistakes; you'll break rules; you'll have to be disciplined. But that is all in the bargain. The only question is will you enlist?"

And Glen enlisted!

The war correspondent was compelled to leave, but before doing so he gave Glen much assurance on many subjects.

"About your school," he said. "I hesitate to advise you. I know your Superintendent and will telephone to him to-morrow. Stay with Mr. Newton until you hear from him."

The scoutmaster walked with his guest through

the woods to his car. They had scarcely left before the camp had a visitor in the person of Mr. J. Jervice. The boys crowded around him with great interest, for although obliged to leave his car he had brought with him many diverting trifles, for Mr. J. Jervice had no objection to Sunday trade if conducted on a cash basis.

Glen was still talking to Will Spencer. He was too much occupied with his recent great experience to be easily diverted, and did not even see his old friend Jervice. But Mr. J. Jervice having nothing of the kind to occupy his attention was quick both to see and to speak. Matt Burton was one of those who heard him speak.

"The reform school boy!" he cried.

"You say he has run away from the reform school?"

"He said so himself," asserted Mr. J. Jervice, "and don't forget that I am the one who gets the reward."

"You may take him along with you back to where he came. The cheek of the fellow! Come on, scouts, let's run him out. The scoutmaster isn't here but I'm a patrol leader and I know what to do. Let's run him out."

"Who's that you're going to run out?" asked Glen, coming up, attracted by the loud talking.

"I'm going to run you out, you cheat of a runaway from the reform school. You are a common thief, for all we know. You may be any kind—"

Alas for Glen's discipline. Alas for his good resolves. Had he been right in thinking that the service of Jesus was not for such as he? He flew at Matt with the velocity and ferocity of a tiger. His strength was that of a man, for he had worked hard at all kinds of manual labor. Two or three quick, stinging blows and his passion came to a terrified end as he saw Matt fall to the ground, white and unconscious.

CHAPTER X

J. JERVICE AND HIS GANG

MR. NEWTON, returning to the camp he had left in such quiet peace, found one boy white-faced and sober endeavoring to restore another who lay prostrate on the ground, while some of the excited scouts were earnestly trying to recall their first aid suggestions and others stood in anxious contemplation. A pailful of cold water was being carried to the scene by Chick-chick, but the victim of the fight was mercifully spared its revivifying shock, for just as Mr. Newton came up he opened his eyes and murmured, "Where am I?"

"All scouts are excused excepting Glen and Matt," announced Mr. Newton, taking in the situation the more readily because of his previous knowledge of Burton's baiting tendencies. "If there is to be any fighting in this camp it will have to be done under my personal supervision and according to my rules."

As the scouts strolled off to the timber Matt sat up and looked around him.

"He's an escaped reform school boy, Mr. Newton," he began at once.

"And I suppose you told him so?" asked Mr. Newton.

"I know I'm everything that's bad," said Glen, bitterly. "I told you it was no good for me to enlist."

"Do you want to back out?" asked the scoutmaster keenly.

"I don't want to but I suppose I'll have to."

"It rests with you. Your past record has nothing to do with it and would have nothing if it were black as night. Do you want to back out?"

"No, sir. And I'm sorry I got mad and hit Matt."

"That speech shows that you have enlisted, boy. Matt," said the scoutmaster, turning to the boy who was much bewildered by the conversation as he had been by the blow, "you hear Glen's apology. Now it's your turn."

"But what I said is true," insisted Matt.

"And Glen admits it and has told me all about it. None the less you owe him an apology for throwing it in his face, just as much as he owed you one for putting his fist in your face."

"I don't apologize to anybody," said Matt, with an ugly frown. "I can go home if you like."

"It shall be as Glen says," decided Mr. Newton.

"I don't have anything against you, Matt," said Glen, in as gentle a tone as ever he used in his life. "I started in to be a Christian this afternoon, and part of it is being decent like Apple and Mr. Newton."

"I've nothing to do with a reform school boy," said Matt, and he rose unsteadily to his feet and walked moodily away.

"You're bound to have a lot of that, Glen," said Mr. Newton. "It's part of your discipline. And one of the things you will find hardest to learn will be to take your medicine and take it quietly."

Glen knew that. His new resolves had not changed his old impulses. If any one flung a taunt at him his impulse would be to fling back a blow. His determination would have to be just a little quicker than his impulse. Meantime he found lots of pleasure in the companionship of Apple and Chick-chick and several others. There was a new bond of fellowship between them, a bond which Glen would have found it quite impossible to state in words but which was none the less genuine and fixed. This bond was to mean much

in the next few days for they were to be days of peril and adventure for Glen.

Glen's adventures grew out of his being discovered at camp by Mr. J. Jervice. Mr. Jervice had withdrawn behind some bushes when he saw the conflict beginning between Matt and Glen. Strange to say, any form of conflict was repugnant to the body of J. Jervice although the soul of him rejoiced in it. Let him be safely out of the way and he exulted in scenes of violence, but most cautiously he avoided any close proximity. He believed in playing safe.

When Jervice noted the vigor that Glen was able to put into his swinging blows and then saw Matt stretched out on the ground, he felt very certain that business called him in another direction. No telling upon whom that wild boy might next turn his fury. So he withdrew deeper into the bushes, and as he caught a view of Mr. Newton hurrying up he decided on still more active measures, and scampered away as fast as his pack and the undergrowth would let him.

Jervice was decidedly peeved with Glen. This escaped reform school boy, who should be just the same to him as ten dollars in the bank, had made for him nothing but trouble. J. J. seldom

cherished grudges—it was poor business, being bad for one's judgment. But if ever he held a grudge it was against the person who hurt his pocket-book and as Jervice now figured it Glen had worsted him at least twenty dollars' worth. The items were: First, ten dollars which he should have secured as a reward; second, five dollars which he had been obliged to pay as license fee; third, five dollars he had expected to make on his sales at Camp Buffalo.

Twenty dollars is no slight loss to any one, and although J. Jervice did not toil as hard for his money as most people he loved it much better. He made his money in various ways, some of them not nearly so honest as peddling. He had some friends who were engaged in a rather peculiar business. They went to any place where they understood money had been gathered together, and quietly took it away. They generally notified Mr. Jervice where they would be, and he then came along with his car, loaded the plunder behind a secret partition and carried it away at his leisure.

The business of J. Jervice in this particular locality, however, was somewhat of a variation from the usual procedure. Some friends of Mr. Jervice's friends had done business in this neigh-

borhood before. They had met with misfortune and now suffered confinement at the hands of certain stern authorities who would not even allow them to go out long enough to settle up the loose ends of their affairs. Not having a J. Jervice in their service they had cached certain products of their toil in a cave the secret of which had been disclosed to them by a dissolute Indian. Shut up as they were their only recourse had been to commission the capable man who happened to lead the Jervice gang to recover for them the property for which they had risked their liberty.

This, therefore, had brought to Buffalo Center, first of all, a hard, desperate man, who was the leader of the gang, then J. Jervice with his autocar, and, shortly to follow, various other whose characters were more widely known than commended.

Incidentally the leader had found that the little bank at Buffalo Center had its safe loaded with the sum of ten thousand dollars, which had been placed therein for the convenience of a certain wheat buyer in making some deals. This being rather in the line of work in which he had been most successful the leader had decided to relieve this congestion of cash and had so notified Mr. Jervice as soon as they met.

Mr. J. Jervice was thinking these things over as he went back to his car. He had stopped running now that he was well clear of the camp. He was walking slowly as one who is studying some great problem. It was not the problem of transportation. This was his especial job and he knew what to do about it. But this boy—this boy who owed him twenty dollars! He began to see how he could get his money's worth. A plan formed in his mind for using him.

That night the friends of Mr. Jervice arrived in the neighborhood and gathered without undue ostentation at his camping-place.

They fell into a very solemn conference and they said many things with which we are not greatly concerned. But Mr. Jervice made some remarks which were more than interesting, and showed that though slight in frame and deficient in courage he was a mighty plotter.

"About that window you wanted me to get through," he said. "I can't get through that place."

"Yes, you can," insisted a big man who seemed to be the leader. "What's more, you're the only runt in the gang, an' you'll have to do it. Us big men can't train down to a hundred an' fifty pounds to get through that window."

"Well, it ain't right for me to do it," objected Mr. Jervice. "It ain't safe for me to be 'round the place, I tell you. I ain't very strong an' I might break my neck."

"You'd never do it more'n once, Jervice, so don't let that worry you. You got to do this 'cause nobody else can't git through."

"But I've got a better scheme."

"Spit it out, an' don't waste no time talkin' nonsense, neither."

"I've found a boy. He's strong an' active an' fairly big, but he ain't so big he couldn't git through. He'd be just the one for it."

"What do we want with boys? How would we be squaring him?"

"He's the kind that wouldn't need much squaring. A little piece o' money 'd keep him quiet. He's jest run off f'm the reform school."

"You're dead sure about him?"

"I know how to make sure," said Mr. Jervice. "A reform school runaway is just what we want."

In which conclusion Mr. Jervice showed that he was not as clever as supposed.

CHAPTER XI

GLEN FOLLOWS A FALSE TRAIL

MORNING mail was a great institution in camp. Two scouts, specially detailed, brought it from the Buffalo Center post-office, in a U. S. mail pouch. Mr. Newton opened and distributed it, and happy were the fellows who received letters with which they could retreat to some corner and feast themselves not only once, but sometimes twice and thrice, while pleased smiles circled their countenances.

Because Glen expected none he was all the more surprised when a letter was handed to him. It was a mysterious letter, indeed. The envelope was mysterious, if a dirty and crumpled condition spelled mystery. The writing and spelling were mysterious—most mysterious. Finally the contents of the letter enjoined mystery.

"Say nuffin to noboddy burn this at once," it cautioned. "This is important. Your forchoon is maid and you git part of a big tressure if you do exackly as told. Don't say a word to noboddy

but cum at ten o'clock to the blazed oke wich is just south of your camp if you tell anyboddy or bring anyboddy you wont get to no nuffin about it."

Glen's first impulse was to show the document to Jolly Bill. As Bill was busy in conversation with Mr. Newton he had time to think it over. It was something about the treasure, quite evidently. Very likely it was a trick. Some one was trying to get a laugh on him. Very well. Glen was not at all displeased. He would let them do their worst. It showed that they had taken him in among them and were treating him exactly as one of themselves. He was gratified. He would go along and see it through. If they could make him bite, all right.

There was no difficulty in locating the blazed oak which stood close to the camp. Glen had no watch, but he went early enough to be quite sure of being there by ten o'clock. Then he waited and waited. He was about to give it up as a hoax, when a man slipped quietly out of the woods and advanced toward him. Glen fell into a position of defense as he saw that it was his old enemy, Jervice.

"Now, don't go actin' up," begged Mr. Jervice. "I ain't goin' to do nothin' only tell you how

to git into a good thing. I'm the man as wrote that letter."

"You are!" exclaimed Glen. "What do *you* know about the treasure?"

"I know all about it," Jervice assured him confidentially. "I'm the only feller that can help you git a slice. They's jest one question—are you willin' to go in an' will you keep mum. I don't tell nothin' till you tell me."

"Am I willing? Are you crazy? You bet I'm willing. Try me."

"Well, listen here then. I thought you'd be the feller. Who can I get as is good an' strong an' yet not much over boys' size, thinks I. Then I thinks of you. 'That reform school boy,' I says to myself. 'He's the very feller. Likely he's done this kind of a job before.' "

"I've never had anything to do with treasure before, and I don't know what you mean," said Glen. "Hurry up and tell about it. I want to be back at camp for the swim at eleven o'clock."

"Come over to my car," invited the artful Jervice. "It ain't very far an' we won't be in no danger of being interrupted."

"How's that boy you hit?" asked the peddler as they journeyed. "That was a awful crack you give him."

"He's all right and able to be about," Glen assured him. "I'm sorry I hit him."

Neither Glen nor Jervice knew that Matt was not only able to be about but was at that moment within ten feet of them, being, in fact, just that distance above their heads in a tree which seemed to him to offer such facilities as wild bees might desire in choosing a home. He kept very quiet in his "honey tree" and looked down on them with contempt for both.

"Up to some tricks," he muttered to himself.

The J. Jervice autowagon was not so very far away, but the two were well out of range of Matt's vision before they reached it.

"Now, to begin with," said J. Jervice. "Are you one o' them scouts or ain't you?"

"I am," replied Glen. "I'm a tenderfoot."

"Tenderfoot, eh! Reckon yon ain't so tender. Well, why don't ye wear one o' them uniforms, so's to make ye look like one?"

"I haven't any uniform, yet. Perhaps I could borrow one. What's that got to do with a treasure hunt?"

"It's got a whole lot to do with it. People knows that boys wearing them uniforms is straight, an' we want you to look straight as a string."

"I'm going to get one as soon as I can," Glen assured him. "I want to look straight—that is part of the oath, 'physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.' "

"I don't know nothink about no oaths like that," objected Mr. Jervice, in a dubious tone which indicated that he might know more about other varieties. "We don't care about yer being so straight—jest so ye look straight."

"Well, hurry up and tell about the treasure," urged Glen. "Remember I want to be back by eleven o'clock. You're awfully slow."

"I'm comin' to that. Remember this now—you mustn't never tell nobody nothink about it."

"What do you mean—never tell anybody?" asked Glen. "I guess we know as much about it as you do."

"*You* know about it!" Mr. Jervice seemed incredulous. "What do you know about it?"

"Well, we know what Mr. Spencer told us the other night," insisted Glen.

"What was that?" asked Mr. Jervice cautiously. "Sit down here an' tell me about it."

Glen sat down on the back step of the car and told the story of the lost treasure as he remembered it.

"So that's the treasure story, is it?" came a

deep voice from the side of the car. There stepped into view a man whom Glen had not seen before. He was evidently associated with Mr. Jervice, but he did not in the least resemble him, for instead of being a cringy weakling, he was big and strong and hard.

"That's the story as Mr. Spencer told it to us," replied Glen.

"Say, that's mighty interesting to me," said the man. "Happened right around this neighborhood, too? I'll bet them Indians put that treasure in a cave an' hain't never done nothing about it since 'cause they couldn't sell bullion without giving themselves away."

"I suppose they'd find it hard to sell," said Glen.

"You bet they'd find it hard to sell. They'd just been obliged to leave it in the cave. Bet it's the same cave we're lookin' for. You know any caves around here, boy?"

"No, sir," replied Glen. "I haven't seen a cave in this country."

"You know something about the country?"

"A little bit," Glen cautiously admitted. "I've only been here a few days."

"Get that chart, Jervice, an' we'll see what he reckernises," ordered the leader.

Mr. J. Jervice offered some protest and the two held a whispered conversation of which Glen was evidently the subject.

"Oh, shut up," exclaimed the big man, at last. "I can take care of the kid all right. You git the chart."

Mr. Jervice thereupon dived into the car and soon returned with a rough map which he opened out before the leader.

"Lookahere, boy, look at this," commanded the man. "This remind ye of any place around your camp?"

Glen looked at the chart and saw many things which had become familiar to his eyes in the last few days. There was an elevation that was undoubtedly Buffalo Mound, certain wavy lines that depicted a stream down its west side could scarcely mean anything but Buffalo Creek. A big star was quite conspicuous midway along the course of the stream and Glen was curiously examining words which he made out to be "Deep Springs" and "Twin Elms" when Mr. Jervice put his thumb over the spot.

"Never mind 'bout readin' that too close," objected Mr. Jervice, "what we want to know is did you ever see a place like that?"

"I think I have," admitted Glen.

"Don't you know ye have?" insisted the big man in a harsh voice. "Ain't that the place where yer camp is?"

"It looks something like it," said Glen. "It's open country, open to everybody. Why don't you go and see?"

"There's reasons, boy. Some on 'em you wouldn't understand. We don't mind telling you some of the trouble. Did ye know that all o' that treasure was claimed by the heirs?"

"Whose heirs?" asked Glen.

"Heirs of the freighters as the Indians took it away from. Did you know that a lot o' that bullion had been got out and was held in the bank here at Buffalo Center?"

"Mr. Spencer said nothing about it," replied Glen.

"Because he don't know nothink 'bout it," said J. Jervice. "We know because we represent the heirs. Now if you want to help us, your share will be a hundred dollars; but, remember, you say nothink to nobuddy."

"I won't say anything," Glen promised, rashly.

"If you do you'll be in as bad as anybuddy, so yer better not. If yer goin' to help, fust thing is to go back to camp an' git one o' them suits like they call scout suits."

"I reckon I can borrow one," said Glen.

"Then ye'll go down to Buffalo Center an' look out for the Bank. Walk right in as if ye owned it, jest like a reg'lar boy scout might do."

"I can do that," agreed Glen. "But what's that got to do with it?"

"It's got a plenty. When nobuddy ain't lookin' much you take a good look at a little winder that's clear in the back. You'll see it ain't got no bars over it like the other winders. It's jest 'bout big enough to let a boy through."

"Well?" asked Glen, beginning to feel that it wasn't well at all, and that this plan Mr. Jervice was unfolding had to do with a very different treasure than he had supposed.

"Jest imagine you've been dropped through that winder an' landed on the floor. You've got to go f'm there to the front an' unbolt the door. We can handle the lock all right but they got old fashioned bolts inside. So just wait aroun' an' figure how you'd git acrost the room without knockin' nothink over, an' look particular at the fastenings on that front door so you'll—"

"Stop right there," interrupted Glen. "I won't do anything of the kind."

"What's the matter of you, backin' out that

erway?" exclaimed Mr. Jervice. "Ain't I explained to you that the bank's got our bullion."

"I'm not that green," retorted Glen. "You want to rob the bank. I'm through with you."

"Hold on, boy!" The strong hand of the big leader closed over his shoulder. "Not yet you ain't. We can't let you go off thinkin' that way about us."

Glen wriggled around until he could look into the face of the man who held him. His spirits dropped. It was no weak, trifling face such as J. Jervice exhibited. A hard, rough look—a cruel, remorseless look—a mean, ugly look—all these things he read in that face.

"Mebbe ye'll know me when ye see me agen," said the man.

Glen made no reply.

"I ain't figurin' on you seein' much more o' me, though, nor any of us. D'ye know what I'm goin' to do with you?"

"Send me back to the reform school?" guessed Glen, wishing from the bottom of his heart that he might get off so easily.

The man laughed as if at an excellent joke.

"You're funny, boy—positive funny, you are. Sendin' you to the penitentiary would be easy along o' what I'm goin' to do to you."

"I've never hurt you," cried Glen. "Let me go."

"It ain't safe, boy. They's jest one way you c'n make it safe. Come in along of us an' do what we do. You wouldn't be a reform school runaway if you hadn't never been up to nothink. This'll be easy for you."

It was a temptation that would have tried boys of firmer principle than Glen. This man might do something awful to him if he resisted. He was on the point of yielding—and then came the vision of Matt Burton, white and unconscious, and the recollection of his agony as he thought that he had murdered Matt and lost his first chance to walk straight. Was it better to choose one evil than another?

"Do what you want to," he said bravely, to the big man. "I'm going to be a true scout, if you—if you kill me for it."

There was murder in the man's appearance, evidently enough, for J. Jervice eagerly protested. "You don't want to do no murder, now. Murder means hangin'!"

"Shut up!" commanded the leader. "Look what ye got us into. What can we do with him?"

"We'll have to hide him till we git away," said Jervice.

"No good trying to hide him round here. Them scouts will be missin' him when he don't get to his meals an' swarm all over here. You run over to the city—it's only twenty-four miles. You ought to be back easy by night. You know who to leave him with."

"He's a desperate hard boy to manage," complained J. Jervice with some recollection of previous dealings. "I'm afeared one man can't handle him."

The leader laughed significantly.

"One *man* could," he declared. "But that ain't saying the kid wouldn't be too much for you."

"Tie him up," urged Mr. Jervice. "I can handle him when he's tied."

"Brave man!" sneered the leader. "Get me a little rope an' I'll do him up scientific."

He was as good as his word. When his scientific job was finished the only thing Glen could do without restraint was to perspire. He could make a few muffled noises, but no intelligible sound could he utter.

"Now chuck him inside the car, please," begged Mr. Jervice. "He'll be quiet now."

"Quiet enough," said the leader. "But hustle your car out of here and get him twenty miles away

as quick as you can. We don't want no scouts trackin' around while he's here."

Glen's spirits took another slump. It was bad enough to be captured, but his faith had been great in the scouts' deliverance. Following him twenty or thirty miles was another thing.

CHAPTER XII

THE BEE TREE

MATT'S presence in the tree beneath which Glen walked with J. Jervice was neither accident nor coincidence. He had business there—business which he considered important, which he did not wish to share either with J. Jervice or Glen Mason or any other person. At least he did not wish to share it right at that moment; later on would be another story.

Matt was making a bee tree. Perhaps you did not know that bee trees could be made, nor how to make them. Matt himself was not very clear on either of these heads. He was experimenting, and back of his experiment was a desire to get even with Chick-chick.

Henry Henry, commonly called Chick-chick, did not desire to shine as a great athlete, sport leader, a water witch, or in any of the other specialties in which Matt reveled, but he did pretend to know a little something about beetles, bugs, butterflies and bees. He had long cherished an ambition to find a "bee tree." At last night's camp

fire he had announced his positive belief, based on observations of the day, that such a tree was somewhere in the vicinity of the blazed oak. He had watched the bees until dark without definitely locating his tree but he had not given up.

Matt decided that it would be a great pity to let all Chick-chick's efforts go for nothing. He proposed to help find such a tree, or to put Chick-chick in the way of it so that he would be bound to find it. He wanted the find to be public, and the interest in it to be so popular that all thought of buried treasure—especially treasure buried in a bread-box—would be obliterated forever from the minds of those in camp.

Matt had gone to some little trouble in his fixing. He had neatly lettered a sign: "Wild honey. Prepared by the Honey Bees for Chick-chick." This he stuck into the bottom of the hollow limb, only an end protruding. Then he put in a good chunk of honeycomb, begged from Bob. From a small jar he then released some half dozen bees which he had allowed himself to borrow from Mr. Ryder's hives. His supposition was that these bees would fill up and fly back to the hives. Soon they would return bringing their mates with them. In a short time a steady stream of bees would be passing in and out of that hollow

limb, which would be just the time for Chick-chick to make his proud discovery and announce it.

After Matt had fixed the tree to his satisfaction his chief trouble was to lead Chick-chick to make the discovery in a perfectly natural manner. The best opportunity came as they went back to camp after the morning swim. Chick-chick was always a wanderer, likely at any moment to dart off in sudden pursuit of something. This morning it was a butterfly, and to Matt's delight he ran in the direction of the loaded tree. The crowd joined in the pursuit. They were within a short distance of Matt's tree before they gave it up.

"How about that bee tree you were going to get, Chick-chick?" suggested Matt. "Round here somewhere, isn't it?"

"Why not?" asked Chick-chick. "Why not. Why ain't this good place as any for bee make her happy cupboard?"

"Show it to us, Chick-chick. You're hiding it. We know what you are trying to do. You want to keep all that honey for yourself."

"Chick-chick wants all the honey for himself," chimed the chorus. "Lead us to your bee tree, Chick-chick. Don't be selfish."

"A'right, boys. There's bee tree in these woods. I don't want dinner—want bee tree. All

who feel just so an' similar follow me. Here flies honey-bee right now. Watch her!"

And the bee sailed right to Matt's tree.

"Oh, look at the bees buzzing around that hole. Let me get at it," cried an excited scout.

"Not too familiar," warned Chick-chick. "Bees have feelin's. D'ye never hear the piece:

"How doth the little honey bee
In self defense excel.
She gives her life for one sharp sting
Yet hath she spent it well."

"Leave it to the expert, fellows," cried Matt. "Let him get at it. Make way for the sum of all knowledge."

"It's me he means," modestly admitted Chick-chick. "He wants me to tackle this peculiar tree. Peculiar tree an' peculiar bees!"

"Why peculiar?"

"They've done changed theirselves since I saw 'em yes'day. To-day they're Italians—the nicest kind of tame bees we have. Yes'day they was wild, black Germans—nothing like this."

"What changed 'em?"

"Jes' naturally smart, reckon. See, they scratched the bark gettin' up tree, too. Here's place one of 'em rested number nine shoe an' cut

bark through. Most remarkable honey bees ever heard of."

"Why don't you go up an' find out about 'em?"

"Answer me this botanical riddle first. What's difference between tree and a plant?"

"We give it up."

"You too, Matt?"

"Sure I give it up. What is it."

"Well, Matty, Great an' Only; in this case ain't no difference. This is tree an' plant too. 'Tain't a bee tree but it's bee plant, see. Watch the bees. Ought to be comin' in loaded an' goin' away light. But they ain't—they're doing just totherwise. Somebody's put some stuff up there. Who d'ye reckon?"

But Matt was already stealing away.

"Let him go," directed Chick-chick. "Bees are all buzzing 'stung' they are. But no stinger in me."

After that, no one cared further what the tree held. They rushed back to camp, for the dinner hour was upon them and their appetites were brisk from their swim.

Dinner was almost ended when Chick-chick, who was acting as a waiter, was called to the end of the table where the scoutmaster sat with Will Spencer.

"Mr. Spencer is wondering about Glen Mason," said Mr. Newton. "He hasn't come in, yet, for dinner. Was he at the swim?"

"No, sir. I haven't seen Brick since morning."

The scoutmaster rose to his feet.

"Mason has not appeared at dinner. Has any one seen him since ten o'clock?"

There was no answer; the boys waited in silence. At last Chick-chick held out a crumpled sheet of paper.

"I haven't seen him, but here's what found near tree where Matt thought he'd found bee tree," he explained.

It was the note from J. Jervice. Mr. Newton read it in silence.

"I don't know who could have written such a note," he remarked, handing it to Jolly Bill.

Then Matt Burton found his voice.

"I was in the neighborhood where the note was dropped this morning and I saw Mason in company with the very disreputable peddler fellow who came here Sunday. They seemed very intimate and were going off together."

"What do you mean by going off together?"

"I mean they were just walking along through the woods like they'd always known each other and were planning something. The thought came

to me that they might be accomplices and the peddler had sent the boy into our camp just to work something up."

"He sure did it," volunteered Chick-chick.

"Something up and something down," suggested an irresponsible listener.

"That's enough, boys." Mr. Newton brought them sharply to order. "Burton has no right to such a guess nor you to such remarks. They don't make for harmony. They aren't helpful. You may all go now, except the patrol leaders and assistants and the signal corps."

When the little group had collected Mr. Newton continued his remarks.

"Glen Mason is a scout—a member of this troop—and we are responsible for him in more ways than one. Mr. Spencer and I know enough about him to be sure that there is no reason why he should go away with the peddler excepting under misrepresentation. Perhaps nothing out of the way has happened, but we have just a suspicion that Jervice is making an effort to get Glen into his hands for a reward which he thinks he will get."

"He'll have a sweet time holding him in his hands after he gets him," interrupted Jolly Bill.

"Unless he has help," corrected Mr. Newton.

"And this is not improbable. Because of this I want the scouts to divide into groups of four and explore the territory I lay out. Each patrol leader and each assistant will take three boys. Signal and make for headquarters at once if you find anything. If there is any need of a rescue don't attempt it without me. Henry may start at the place where he found the note."

Thus it happened that a short time later, Chick-chick, Goosey and two other scouts were making a careful search around the bee tree.

"Everything's trampled flat around here. That crowd this morning did it," announced Chick-chick. "Every fellow spread out ten yards to his left."

It was Goosey who found the trail.

"Here it is," he cried. "It's Brick's trail all right. Mr. Spencer said to look for marks of heel plate on the right shoe and here it is. There was somebody with him."

The ground being soft and damp in spots there was no difficulty in following the trail. It led them to an open glen which showed a recent camp fire and the travel of many feet. Leading off toward the road were the broad depressions made by the tires of an automobile.

"My find, now," cried Chick-chick. "Here's

where we do some real fine work, an' we can do it on the run, we can. See the tracks. What are they?"

"Automobile tracks," yelled the squad.

"What kind of a tire made 'em?"

There was no enthusiastic shout this time.

"An automobile tire," ventured Goosey.

"Jes' so, Goosey. Jes' so! It was rubber one, too, why don't you say? Good, safe guess—rubber."

"All right, Chick-chick. Be as funny as you want. If my father ran a garage I reckon I'd know something about tires, too."

"'Scuse me! You certainly right, Goosey. Who ought know automobile tires if not me. What I want you see is these tires can be followed anywhere 'cause they're non-skid with that peculiar bar formation. They'll show up on road so we can follow on dead run, we can."

"How do you know we want to follow? What makes you suppose Mason has gone in the car? Maybe we'll find his tracks going on away from here."

"Bright thought, Goosey. Ev'body look for tracks leading 'way from here."

They searched industriously but in vain.

"No good," decided Chick-chick. "Got old

Brick in their wagon, all right, all right. We must go after him, we must."

"Mr. Newton said not to attempt any rescue."

"We ain't was going to. Back to headquarters an' report an' me for my motor-bike. Mr. Newton mebbe can get a car in Buffalo Center an' mebbe he can't; but no heavy old buzz-wagon can get where my motor-bike can't catch 'em."

Mr. Newton agreed to Chick-chick's plan of chase rather more readily than he had expected.

"It's perhaps as good a thing as we can do," he asserted, discussing the plan with Will Spencer. "I have a good many of the younger scouts in my especial care and cannot afford to leave camp on a wild goose chase."

"Motor-bike carries two," suggested Chick-chick. "Apple go with me?"

"Yes. You and Corliss may go. Don't do anything foolish. If you overtake the car get the peddler to stop. If Glen is a captive use your coolest judgment about interfering. The man may be armed and it would be far better to push on to the nearest town and get help than to risk a bullet. Of course, if Glen should be going of his own wish you must just come back and tell me."

"No fear of that," said Spencer.

"What shall we do if he isn't to be seen and the peddler won't let us look inside?" asked Apple.

"A scout's judgment and ingenuity ought to be worth something in such a case," replied Mr. Newton. "I prefer not to instruct you. I'm not sending you two big fellows out as messenger boys but as scouts. Use all the knowledge and courage and skill that you have, but don't take unnecessary risks."

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHASE ON THE MOTOR-BIKE

THE boys felt the importance of their commission as they rode away from the camp on the motorcycle. They had no difficulty picking up the track of the auto-car. It ran directly to the village and on through.

"Let's find out what the old car looks like," suggested Apple. "Maybe, too, they can tell us just how long ago it passed."

There was no difficulty in getting a description of the car—one enthusiastic person even went so far as to detail all the various articles advertised by J. Jervice for sale.

"How many people were riding?" asked Apple.

"A little man at the steering wheel and a big fellow perched up next to him."

"Didn't you see a boy on it?"

"No boy anywhere unless he was inside. Of course we couldn't tell about inside. It's jest like a wagon in a circus parade—nice paint on the outside an' the inside left to yore 'magination."

"Two men on the wagon—one a big fellow!" exclaimed Apple, as they left the fount of information. "We'll have to be pretty careful what we do."

"Sure will," agreed Chick-chick. "They got over an hour's start, so we'll have to go some—Hello, have they been stopping here?"

"Looks like it. There's marks that show a man got off the car."

"The big man," said Chick-chick. "Look where the tracks are headed, Apple. He's gone back to the village. Didn't get back on car at all. Good for us."

Chick-chick had correctly guessed. After J. Jervice and his car were safely through the village the big man had alighted.

"I'm goin' back to lie aroun' an' meet the other fellows," he said to Jervice. "You beat it along with your car. You can stop an' do a little tradin' when ye get to the next county. That'll prove you wasn't anywheer around if anythink should happen to-night. But be sure you git rid of the kid an' start back so's to git here by midnight."

Apple and Chick-chick took up the trail with renewed confidence now that they felt they had only Jervice to reckon with. They had seen him

at the scout camp last Sunday and had no great respect for his dimensions or prowess.

It was late in the afternoon when first they saw the peddler's car in the road ahead.

"Let's trail along kind o' slow and watch him awhile," suggested Apple. "Maybe he'll be stopping somewhere."

As it happened this guess was well founded. Mr. J. Jervice had two reasons for stopping. One was that he wanted himself to be seen a good, long distance away from the bank, so that he could prove that he was far distant from that region if any robbery occurred. The other was a natural cupidity which sorely regretted the necessity of hurriedly passing prosperous farm houses where perfectly good money was all ready to exchange for his wares.

A mile further on a splendid house came into view. Everything about it spelled prosperity—its barns, and silos and windmills and fences all showed that the residents believed in having what they needed and had money to spend on their needs. The bait was irresistible. Mr. Jervice stopped his car at the side of the road, clambered down from his seat and went to lift the bars from the rear door.

Two boys on a motorcycle ditched their wheel a hundred yards away and crept cautiously up.

"He's going to the house to try to sell something," whispered Apple. "We must keep him from locking those back doors so we can look inside."

"We sure will," vowed Chick-chick.

Crouching in the bushes at the side of the road their pulses throbbed in great excitement as they observed that the peddler addressed some one inside the car. His tone was low so they did not catch the words, but they heard a mumble and saw his cruel laugh.

"We'll teach him to laugh," whispered Chick-chick.

"But supposing he shuts and locks that rear door before he goes up to the house."

"That's up to us. We'll watch him. If he locks it we must catch him as he goes through that orchard and get the key away."

They watched in great anxiety. Mr. Jervice closed the rear doors of his van and put the heavy bars in their slots, but, secure in the isolation of his surroundings, he did not apply the padlock. Wherein, Mr. Jervice committed a grievous error.

Scarcely was he concealed within the orchard

than the two scouts rushed to the car, lifted the bar and swung back the door. There lay their new comrade, helplessly trussed and gagged, faint and weary with the close confinement, almost ready to collapse.

"Water!" he gasped, as Apple took the gag from his mouth. "Get me a drink."

Apple was able to supply him from his canteen, and even as he held it to the parched lips, Chick-chick was slashing the cords that had been drawn needlessly tight.

"I think I can manage this little old machine, I can," announced Chick-chick. "Apple, you can run my bike. Go back and get it."

"Rub my wrists where the cords cut, while he's gone," Glen begged. "That fellow that tied me up—he's a thief, that's what he is. He pulled 'em tighter just to see me wince."

He was too cramped to stand on his feet so Chick-chick kneeled down at his side to rub some circulation into his wrists and ankles. Suddenly a great noise of running was heard. Chick-chick looked out through the crack of the door.

"It's the peddler," he declared. "He's running like a bull was chasing him, he is. He's headed straight for the car."

"We'll give him a surprise," said Glen.

"Probably he's run on to somebody who knows that he's a thief and they're after him. I'll just lie the way I was and you stand where the door will hide you."

Glen missed his guess in one important trifle. J. Jervice did not wait to be surprised. He was in such terror that he waited for nothing. He threw a pack in at the door, slammed it, dropped the bar in place with the incredible swiftness of long practice and in less than a minute had his motor cranked and the car in motion.

Coming up on the motorcycle a minute later Apple saw the car disappearing around a turn in the road, and wildly chasing it a puffing, panting old man, brandishing a heavy club.

The positions of the scouts were changed for the better, but they yet were a long distance from freedom. Instead of Glen tied and gagged in the car with Chick-chick and Apple following on the motorcycle, Apple now was following alone, while, imprisoned in the car, were both Glen and Chick-chick with the fortunate difference that the gag and bonds were removed.

"We're shut in," whispered Chick-chick. "Pretty mess I made of rescue, I did."

"No mess at all," said Glen. "I'm free now and ready for anything, or shall be when I get

some circulation in my feet and hands. Can't move till then, anyway. What d'ye s'pose Apple's doing?"

"Following us along, Apple is, you bet. When he gets a chance he'll help us out, he will. Say, what's loose board here?"

"I don't know," replied Glen. "It's got a ring in it like it might be intended to be lifted up."

"Bet I know," said Chick-chick. "I reckon the transmission case is just below here, an' this is fixed to lift out so you can see transmission without crawling underneath."

"It wouldn't make a big enough hole to let us out, would it?" asked Glen.

"No, it wouldn't. But if I can get to that transmission I can stop car—won't run little bit."

"Could you start it again?"

"Depend on what I did to gears."

"Let's try it."

The board came up easily. Four bolts held the lid of the transmission case but were readily removed with Chick-chick's pocket wrench.

"Now we'll pack in something soft. Clog up the gears without breaking 'em."

"What good will that do—except make him mad."

"Help us out—it will. He isn't enough me-

chanic to find out why can't run. Off he goes town after help. Leaves us here do as we please. We know where trouble is. Fix it. Off we go."

There was plenty of soft material to feed into the transmission case. The car pulled unsteadily and stopped. The boys cautiously replaced the board in the floor and awaited developments. They could hear J. Jervice tinkering around, examining brakes and wheels and everything but the transmission.

"Hey, you!" he called after a few minutes. "You inside there! D'ye hear me?"

Then as it probably occurred to him that he could expect no great volubility from a gagged prisoner he continued:

"I've broke down an' I'm goin' to git help. When I bring a mechanic back don't ye try makin' no racket or it'll be the worse for ye."

The first positive assurance that he had gone was when Apple came up on the motorcycle, lifted the bar and opened the doors. It did not take them long to scramble out.

The world looked very beautiful to the eyes of Glen Mason after his hours of real peril and imprisonment. It was fine to be able once more to stretch out and shake loose every little muscle, to be able to draw in a long breath, just as deep

as one wanted, free from the muffling of a foul mouth gag. The world was a good old place in which to live and surely Glen would henceforth try to live in it in an appreciable manner.

"Look here, fellows," said Chick-chick. "I know all about this old wagon. I can make it go ramblin' right along; handle it so it's perfectly tame an' gentle—take the bit nice an' stand 'thout hitchin'. What d'ye say? Do we make the horsey go for Mr. Jervice?"

"You mean run away with it?" asked Apple. "That wouldn't be right, would it?"

"You don't know much 'bout this gang, Apple. Brick's been telling me. He's found out about 'em, Brick has. Regular band o' thieves, they are."

"Thieves!" exclaimed Apple. "No wonder they acted mean."

"No wonder. Wonder is they did no worse, it is. They think they're going rob Buffalo Center bank to-night. We'll show 'em, we will."

"Would taking their car away stop them?"

"It would be apt to hinder," said Glen. "I think Jervice carries their kit in his wagon and they depend on him to get their stuff hauled away."

"Take away their little old wagon sure will bother 'em."

"What would you do with it?"

"Turn it round. Run back to Buffalo Center and give sheriff."

"All right," agreed Apple. "You'll have to get busy if you want to get it back before dark. I suppose I'll have to ride the motor-bike."

"Reckon you're elected, Apple. Brick can't ride it, an' I can't run more 'n one at a time."

"Well, I'll not get far ahead of you. I'll keep you in sight, anyway."

CHAPTER XIV

SAFE AT CAMP BUFFALO

RIDING triumphantly on the driver's seat with Chick-chick made the return journey very different from the miserable trip Glen had made inside the car, bound and gagged, and horribly jolted at every irregularity of the road.

"Shall we leave car at Buffalo Center, or run right on to camp an' show the booty?" asked Chick-chick.

"We haven't made the trip yet," Glen reminded him. "If we're lucky enough to get all the way to Buffalo Center we'd better deliver it to the first officer we see, sheriff or constable," counseled Glen. "We don't want to be arrested for stealing. It won't do for me to be arrested for anything."

"But don't you think we ought let scoutmaster see it? Let him have say about it. Don't you think?"

"Perhaps we ought," agreed Glen, who saw clearly that Chick-chick longed for the honor of

driving his captured car proudly into camp—an exciting honor which he was not reluctant to share.

"It certainly would be fine if we could make it."

But it was not to be. Daylight was still pretty good, so that they could see a long distance back along the road. And so, when they still had several miles to go, they looked back and saw their nemesis overhauling them.

"That car's coming like fury," observed Glen. "I'll bet it's Jervice and his friends hot after us."

"'Fraid so," sighed Chick-chick. "Gettin' all speed out of the old wagon I can."

"We'd better try to catch Apple and all get on the motor-bike," suggested Glen.

"Can't catch Apple unless he takes notion to turn an' see we want him. Think we can hide, I do."

"Hide the car, too?"

"Hide the car. Saw place on way out. It's less'n mile from here. There's creek pretty near dry, and bridge over it. But there's ford by side of bridge, too. We forded it coming out."

"Can you get the car down?"

"Think I can. Think can run down by ford an' get under bridge. They'll go shooting by without seeing us, they will."

It was time to be taking some action. As they mounted the hill they were evidently seen by the pursuers who sent a pistol shot after them, though not with any possibility of reaching them. At the foot of this hill lay the creek.

Chick-chick slackened speed and scanned the bank eagerly to see if the car could make the descent. Dusk was already present under the heavy timber by the creek, and he left the road slowly with the double object of feeling his way and leaving as little track as possible.

Glen leaped from the car and bent back the brush flattened out by the wheels and kicked dust over the tracks left by the car in turning. Then he rushed down and found that by skillful driving Chick-chick had managed to make the descent safely and drive the car under the arch of the bridge, so concealed by the abutments and by outgrowing bushes that there would be little likelihood of attracting notice from above excepting from careful searchers.

A few seconds later the noise overhead told them that the pursuing car had rushed on, still hot in the chase.

"What's to do, now, Brick?" asked Chick-chick. "Got old car down pretty easy, we did. Don't

know about getting back. Reckon I could cross over an' climb t'other side."

"I don't believe we want to try it," counseled Glen. "We are only a couple of miles from Buffalo Center. They'll be there in a minute or two. When they find we've dodged 'em they'll start back hunting for us. We'll meet 'em and there'll be real trouble. We don't want their car, anyway."

"Let's walk on an' catch Apple, then," suggested Chick-chick. "When he finds we don't come he'll either wait for us or start back. We can all ride into camp on the bike, we can."

"Leave the wagon just like this?"

"Why not? 'Tain't ours: All we've done is interfere with burglars. If this car carries the burgling things to rob the bank they won't be able to burgle to-night, anyway. Let's look for that chart they showed you. If it's anything about the treasure it's ours."

"He said he kept it on the shelf with his railroad guides. I'm afraid he put it in his pocket after they'd looked at it."

They found the shelf with the railroad folders, but no chart of any description was there.

"'Fraid you'd see more of it than they wanted," suggested Chick-chick.

"They need not," said Glen. "I don't care what's on their chart."

"Why not?" asked Chick-chick. "Why not? They got chart cave. Cave is somewhere between our camp an' top Buffalo Mound. They say Indian cave an' think Indians have hid treasure there; why not?"

"What makes you think the cave is between our camp and the top of Buffalo Mound?"

"Didn't you say Jervice man stuck his thumb over—so shut out your look. What he do that for if cave ain't there?"

"You jump too quick, Chick-chick. I'm not sure there's a cave at all. I just know that they talked as if they were looking for a cave or a hole in the ground or some place where somebody had hid a lot of plunder."

"Sure you know it. An' why wouldn't it be a cave? An' didn't you say the big man said he'd bet Indians had bullion hid in same cave they were hunting. Didn't you?"

"That isn't saying it's so," objected Glen.

"It's sayin' it's worth lookin'," affirmed Chick-chick. "Didn't one of 'em say chart was drawn from description Indians gave?"

"Yes, but they might have been fooling 'em."

"An' they might not. If it's Indian cave it's

got our treasure. You draw copy that chart from memory soon as we get back, you do."

"I can't draw," objected Glen. "Maybe I can remember enough about it to tell you or Apple how to put it on paper."

"Here's Apple coming now," said Chick-chick. "He's the boy to draw. Draws better 'n flax seed poultice. You'll draw him all maps he wants when we get to camp, won't ye, Apple?"

"If we ever get back," said Apple. "It's getting dark. Father will be anxious. Why are you leaving the car?"

"Don't want it," explained Chick-chick. "Isn't ours. 'Fraid somebody see us with it an' think our name is Jervice. We all get on little old bike an' hike along sudden, we do."

Three boys was no special load for the motor-bike. They were constantly on the look out for the pursuing car which they expected to meet coming back, but nothing did they see of it. They rushed through Buffalo Center and a few minutes later Chick-chick blew his horn for the camp.

Great was the excitement when it was seen that the search party not only had returned but had brought the missing boy. Glen was almost mobbed by the crowd of scouts who pulled him one

way and another in vociferous and jovial greeting. It was an experience such as had never happened in all his life, and his heart throbbed with thankfulness, and unbidden and unexpected tears rushed to his eyes that he should be honored with such a welcome by such loyal comrades. "God is good," came the thought, and he knew that henceforth he would live a richer, deeper and more loyal life because of this experience.

Off to one corner Apple had a noisy audience and there were yet others who gathered about Chick-chick as he retailed to them in his jerky fashion such things as he deemed proper for them to know. Loud and furious discussions were heard from every group.

"There won't be any looting of the Buffalo Center Bank while the scouts are in camp, that's a cinch," proclaimed big Tom Scoresby.

"Tom'll see to that," added Chick-chick.

"If Tom doesn't do it alone, the scouts will," insisted Tom. "We wouldn't let robbers loot a bank with us in camp not a mile away, would we, Mr. Newton?"

"We wouldn't expect to have anything of the kind going on," agreed Mr. Newton.

"Great yarn, this," Matt Burton, was saying to his own little group. "I reckon we're expected

to swallow it with our eyes shut. I never heard such stuff."

"What d'ye mean it's a yarn, Matt?" asked a scout.

"This story about those fellows being bank robbers. Why that scared little old peddler would be afraid to rob a sandbank. If anybody gave him a cross look, he'd die."

"You don't mean to say Brick Mason's lying?"

"Oh, no! He just has dreams."

"Did he dream himself tied up with cords cutting in so sharp they left red welts and took half hour to get circulation going?" demanded Chick-chick who had overheard.

"Red welts nothing!" retorted Matt. "I could raise red welts all over my body and never feel it."

"You keep makin' insinuations an' I know fellow 'll raise red welts on you so you won't feel anything for month," threatened Chick-chick. "I felt those welts. Saw 'em too. Plain as the ridges on a non-skid tire. Anybody's thinks Brick had 'em made for fun can get all that kind o' fun he wants."

"What's the trouble, scouts?"

It was Mr. Newton, his attention drawn by the angry tones.

"Explainin' 'bout Brick's body marks," said Chick-chick.

"I think you've talked long enough." Mr. Newton easily guessed the quarrel. "Go along with Corliss and Glen and work your tongue on your supper. You other fellows see they get filled up."

Glen had rushed to Will Spencer at his first free moment, but the supper table gave him his first real chance for conversation with him. Will had his billy cart pushed up where he could clap Glen on the shoulder and tell him again how glad he was to see him safe and sound.

"Nice, comfortable day you've given your Uncle Bill," he said in cheerful accusation.

"Did you worry about me?" asked Glen.

"Not so much about you," explained Jolly Bill. "But I had a terrible time making my mind easy about that poor peddler and worrying about what would happen to him when you found he'd run off with you."

"I didn't believe there was anything J. Jervice could do to me, but I found people worse than him. I believe he's one of a robber gang—"

"I don't understand these references to robbers," interrupted Mr. Newton. "Perhaps you'd better make it clear to us."

So for the benefit of the two men, Glen went over the whole story, telling them all about his capture, his suspicions of the gang, the chart he had seen, and the way they had treated him when he refused to acquiesce in their plans.

"That sounds very grave," said Mr. Newton, busy already penciling a note. "I'll get you to take this letter to town, Henry, just as soon as you have finished your supper."

"You think they intended to rob the bank tonight?" asked Spencer.

"That was their original plan, I am sure; but I don't know—"

He was interrupted by a very earnest and eager delegation of scouts, with big Tom Scoresby at its head. Tom saluted and asked permission to address a request to the scoutmaster.

"We want to go out and capture these bank robbers before they get far away," he explained. "According to what Chick-chick says, the peddler's car is within three miles of here. Our plan is to go after it and use it to catch the thieves."

"How many scouts are in for this?" asked Mr. Newton.

As with one voice fifteen scouts shouted "I." Others came running to swell the number.

"Let us think this over quietly, scouts. It

would be a great thing for us to capture this gang of thieves, wouldn't it?"

There was no doubt that the sentiment met with unanimous favor.

"Why would it be such a fine thing?"

Dead silence prevailed for a moment after this direct question; then all manner of answers filled the air.

"Show what scouts can do!"

"Put an end to bank robbing!"

"Protect our fellow citizens!"

"Glory for troop 3!"

"A scout is helpful!"

"Great sport to catch robbers!"

"A scout is brave!"

"Show we're good as men!"

These were some of the answers that were shot at the scoutmaster.

When quiet prevailed Mr. Newton resumed his talk.

"A man asked me once if I didn't think the National Council made a mistake in its decree that every organization of scouts must have a scoutmaster.

" 'You baby your boys,' " he said. 'You ought to put them on their own responsibility.'

"But he forgot that certain things, such as a

tempered judgment, come only by experience. A scout is brave and a scout is helpful, true enough. But a scout must learn how to use his bravery and when to be helpful.

"Now suppose I allowed you to organize for a robber hunt, and suppose that, during that hunt, some robber was so unfair as to fire real cartridges and hit some member of our expedition. What good would it do to tell the boy's mother that her son was brave, or helpful, or adventurous, or daring? What would it avail to tell her that in preparation for manhood scouts must develop daring and courage?"

He paused, but the silence was broken by no reply.

"I can conceive of circumstances in which the risk of your lives would be your duty, and I hope that, should they come, no scout of this troop will count life dearer than honor. But this is not one of them. This is a plain case for plain handling, and I want to tell you how I have handled it.

"There is a deputy sheriff in the village and I have sent word to him of the circumstances and of our suspicions. He, being a regularly appointed officer of the law, will take such steps as seem best to protect the bank and to apprehend the robbers. He is not likely to call for help

from this camp for he knows that there are but two citizens here who could legally be enlisted in his posse. One of them is crippled, and the other has a squad of young boys in his care; but if the sheriff should feel a need to call upon these men, I venture to say that neither will hold back."

The boys moved away in rather an unusual silence. It was broken by a voice from a distant group, speaking loudly in heavy sarcasm.

"No need to bother about what the sheriff will do. He won't do a thing because he'll know that the whole thing is a plant."

The words rang out quite distinctly above the rather subdued hum of the other voices.

"The Great an' Only Matty!" exclaimed Chick-chick in disgust. "He sure knows all about it if it's *plant.*"

CHAPTER XV

STRENGTH AND LOYALTY

GLEN found next day that he had suddenly become somewhat of a hero. Apple and Chick-chick had privately given very good accounts of his fortitude and resource. He felt about as happy as ever in his life and all manner of good impulses stirred within him.

None of the three who had taken chief part in yesterday's adventure felt very much inclined to energy this bright morning. Glen lay in the warm grass close to Jolly Bill and his billy-cart in peaceful comfort. His muscular arms were a senna brown, his bare chest the same color, excepting where it was marked by a dull blue design similar to that which caused an anchor and various rings to appear prominently upon his arms.

"'Lo, Brick," said the cheery voice of Chick-chick, whose light hearted philosophy and undisturbed equanimity under all circumstances Glen greatly admired. "Some strong man, ain't you, Brick?"

"Pretty strong for a boy," Glen admitted.

"Say, Brick, Goosey wants ask you question," jerked out Chick-chick. "Goosey so bashful wouldn't come alone, he wouldn't."

"I'd like fine to be strong like you, Brick," said Goosey. "Some of us kids have been talking about it and one fellow says he's noticed that strong men like sailors and railroad men always have tattoo marks like you got. A brakeman told him that's what made him strong. Some of *us* want you to fix us up."

Glen laughed, but it was a bitter laugh.

"Do you know how much I'd give to have these marks cleared off, if I had the money?" he asked, savagely.

"Cleared off!" exclaimed Goosey. "Why, Brick, they're just handsome. That anchor on your arm and the flag on your chest—why we kids think they're great!"

"Wait till you kids get to be a little bit older and find out what real people think of 'em—I mean people that are people. They call 'em gallows marks in the school back there. The chaplain he's strong against 'em. I 'member when he caught a kid having some ink pricked in by one of us."

"Got after you, did he?" asked Chick-chick.

"Well, he says, 'You kids know why I always wear a bandage round my right arm when I play tennis?' I'd often wondered. 'I suppose it's to strengthen the arm,' I guessed."

"Was it?" asked Goosey, eagerly. If there was anything that would strengthen an arm he wanted to know it.

"Strengthen the arm nothing!" replied Glen, with contempt. "He rolled up his sleeve and showed us where he had a woman's head tattooed in. I s'pose you'd say it was a peach of a head, Goosey."

"Wasn't it done right?" asked Goosey.

"Done fine. Done as well as they're ever done. But he was ashamed of it. He put on that bandage just so it wouldn't show when his sleeve was rolled up."

"I don't understand that," said Goosey, in evident disappointment.

Chick-chick, too, inclined to the opinion that the chaplain was over nice.

"You'd understand if he spoke to you about it," said Glen. "He says to us: 'Every once in a while you'll find a good man and a smart man that is all marked up with tattoo marks, but where they're carried by one clean, smart man, there's a hundred bums and tramps that have 'em. If

a good man has 'em it's a safe bet that he didn't put 'em on when he was doing well. It means that some time in his life he was down in bad company. It's the poorest kind of advertising."

"That's why he hid 'em up, then."

"Chiefly. He says 'One reason I cover this up is so it won't set foolish ideas into boys' heads. There's many a business man would pay ten thousand dollars to get rid of the ugly marks. There are all kinds of ways but none of 'em work well and most of 'em cost the fellow that owns the skin an awful lot o' pain as well as the money. The way to get rid of tattoo marks,' he says, 'is not to put 'em on.' "

"But since you can't help having 'em, you aren't going to let 'em keep you down, are you, Brick, old top?"

It was Jolly Bill who asked the question. They had thought him asleep in his cart.

"No, nor anything else," declared Glen. "I'm not so far behind. Somebody asked me once, 'How does it come you talk so well?' They don't understand that we learn as much in the state schools as in the regular public school, and we have to do our best or make a show at it, whether we want to or not."

"But, Brick," persisted Goosey. "You said a

lot about the tattoo marks, but you didn't say yet whether it makes you strong."

"Chick-chick," commanded Jolly Bill. "You lead that little boy away. Whatever made you bring him here with his sad story? What is there in a little India ink, pricked beneath the skin, to make you strong—does it make father's shirts strong when mother uses it to put his initials in the corner? Lead him off, Chick-chick."

"That's all right," Goosey observed. "Matt Burton thinks it's what makes Brick strong. Matt says no reform school boy could knock him down if he hadn't been doped up with some stimulant."

"You mustn't pay too much atttention to what Matt Burton says," counseled Spencer.

"Oh, I don't. Matt says there wasn't any thief and there isn't any cave, and I believe there is. Matt says he wouldn't believe it, anyway, 'cause Brick says it's so."

"You'd better run along, little boy, before you say something Matt'll be sorry for," said Spencer.

Glen had stood a good deal from Matt and had borne it quietly. It was not that it did not sting, but that he believed he was "taking his medicine." Let no one suppose, however, that be-

cause he had started on the up route, Glen Mason disclosed any anatomical peculiarities such as the sprouting of wings. His capacity for taking a wrong view of matters was as great as ever. The only difference was that he resisted it occasionally. But there was a limit to his resistance, and so nearly had he reached it that this report of Goosey's decided him to take a sufficient vacation from his good principles to allow of the administration to Matt Burton of one good, swift punch.

Goosey said that Matt was walking toward Buffalo Center when last seen. There was only one road to the village, so with his bottled up vengeance in his heart Glen struck out along this road.

There, on the main street of the little town, right at the Bank corner, stood Matt talking to a couple of men who sat on the low railing which served for ornament rather than protection to the bank front. One of the men wore a star on his coat; the other was a rough looking individual who yet had an official air.

It was no part of Glen's program to create a public disturbance, but he was quite resolved not to let Matt get far out of his sight. A good plan was to hike through the alley and come up on the south side of the bank building, where, hidden by

a convenient pillar, he would be able to hear what was going on without being seen.

Glen lost no time getting through the alley, and in a few moments, flattened against the wall at the southwest corner, could hear all that Matt said to the men as they sat on the rail at the west front.

"What we want," said one man, "is to catch 'em in the act. They was timid last night and the fust little noise we made they was off. Are you one o' them scouts as seen 'em yestiddy?"

"I have seen the little peddler," asserted Matt. "I didn't think he had spunk enough to rob a blind man."

"Mebbe he has—mebbe he ain't. It don't allus take spunk. Yore chief said they was another fellow—desp'rit villain. Did ye see him?"

"No, I didn't," Matt admitted reluctantly. "I don't often have any luck. It takes fellows like Glen Mason."

"Name sounds familiar. Mason! Glen Mason! Let me look at that circ'lar I got in my pocket. Thought that was it. Fellow, that name, just run off f'm the reform school. Here's the bill about it."

Glen was seized with a paralyzing terror. This constable or sheriff or whatever he was had only

to reach around the corner to lay hands right on him. He forgot all about revenge on Matt—what he now wanted was to get away.

Then he heard the officer's next question.

"This Glen Mason fellow you speak about—is he one of your regular scouts?"

Glen waited in breathless suspense to hear how Judas would betray him. The answer left him high and dry, gasping with surprise.

"Yes, he's a regular scout," said Matt. "He's a tenderfoot. I suppose it isn't such a very uncommon name."

After all, Matt was a scout—a scout and a patrol leader. He might be conceited, he might be supercilious, he might and did need a lot of nonsense sweated out of him. But he was a scout, and—a scout is loyal! He would have loved dearly to see Glen Mason sent back to the reform school and thus removed from disputing his preeminence. But he was no Judas—his should not be the tongue to betray a fellow scout.

Glen straightened the fist that he had clenched so fiercely at his side, and drew a deep breath as he settled himself down more closely into the protection of his pillar.

"I'd like to see the feller that seen the robbers an' took the ride in their car. I'd like to see

the car. I didn't see it when they went through here yestiddy." It was the rough voice again.

"Why not go now and see it?" asked Matt. "The bridge where the boys hid it is only a couple of miles away."

"No good," replied the man. "Them boys wasn't as smart as they thunk. We sent up to get the car fust thing after yore chief sent the word to us last night, but all they was left of it was tracks."

So the car was gone. Glen could easily understand how they discovered it. They had only to run back to where the peculiar tires ended their journey and then search to find where they had left the track. So the ford would have been discovered and then the car.

"If I'd been driving I'd have run it right up to the sheriff's office and claimed the reward," boasted Matt.

"Mebbe you would—mebbe you wouldn't. Mebbe you'd got a few slugs o' lead under your vest. Them fellers must ha' been pretty clos't around to get that car away so quick. I think them boys was clever. Anyway they wasn't no reward then. They is now—five hundred dollars. The Bankers' Association offered it soon as they heard the story."

"When are you going to hunt them out?" asked Matt.

"Huntin' right now, son. Huntin' while we set gassin' with you. We hunts in our sleep."

"No joking, now. When are you going to get up a posse? I want to go along."

"We'll send for ye when we feel that we need ye, son. Come along, Ike. I hear Number Three whistlin' fer the crossin'. Watch the blind baggage."

CHAPTER XVI

DETECTIVE MATTY

GLEN managed to get back to the camp without coming under Matt's notice. His animosity had all disappeared. This one act of loyalty on Matt's part wiped out a great load of snubs and grudges. He knew that his connection with the reform school was quite generally known at the camp, for Mr. Newton himself—subsequent to the disclosures of J. Jervice—had seen fit to explain to the scouts that Glen might be considered as staying under his parole, and had further expressed his conviction that the authorities would certainly make the parole permanent in view of all the facts. An explanation made to friendly boys, however, was a vastly different thing from making one to officers who had a chance to earn a reward. He felt, therefore, that Matt had saved him from a real danger.

Chick-chick and Apple were anxiously awaiting his coming that they might complete the map which they were preparing from his recollection of the chart shown by Jervice. Mr. Newton had

decided that the information Glen had gained from the robbers' chart was his exclusive property, since it had been obtained by him while in peril of life and limb. But Glen was not disposed to take advantage of this, and with the help of Apple and Chick-chick as chartographers was preparing a chart for the free use of the entire camp.

"We have everything sketched in that you told us," said Apple. "What we want now is to be as nearly sure as possible where the big star was."

"It looked to be about half way down the side of the Mound," said Glen. "Right near it I saw marks for 'Twin Elms' and 'Deep Springs.' "

"We've been looking along Buffalo Creek and we can't find any Twin Elms. There's only one place where two elms are anywhere near together and one of them is a great big elm, and the other a little sapling that isn't more than five years old. That would throw it out altogether as far as locating our cave."

"How about Deep Springs?"

"Well, there's the Ice Box. The Springs must be deep there because it's so cold. We used to swim there last year but it's really too cold for fun. That's just about half way down the Mound, but there's no elms anywhere near."

"How would it be to mark that for 'Deep Springs' and put the mark for 'Twin Elms' just where the two elms you speak about are?"

"An' then put big star between 'em an' everything be over but pickin' up treasure," put in Chick-chick, sarcastically.

"No, it wouldn't do," said Apple. "We don't know that Deep Springs and the Ice Box are the same and we are pretty sure Twin Elms couldn't be the old tree and the sapling. The only thing I know to do is to make the marks just like you saw them and let the scouts figure them out for themselves. If we go putting our own ideas in we will likely spoil the whole thing."

"Great head, this," endorsed Chick-chick, patting the curly head appreciatively.

They took the chart out and nailed it to a tree near the cook shack and in a few moments it was being studied by the entire troop which had just gathered for dinner.

It might well be doubted whether the chart served any purpose of enlightenment, after all. It showed certain local land marks and several crosses were designated at different spots but just what they represented was still a mystery. The principal cross was the one over which Mr. Jervice had placed his thumb, and this inclined the ma-

jority to decide to hunt in that direction, but unfortunately it was hard to find "Twin Elms" thereabout, and the "Deep Springs" were only a matter of surmise. It had certainly served the purpose of reviving interest in the treasure hunt and mysterious rumors of a cave in which a robber band had hidden booty did not lessen it.

Will Spencer while pleased at the renewed activity was by no means sure that it would help his search.

"Think we'll have to push on back to our cornfield and do some exploring from the old bed of the lake back to its source, Glen," said he. "Gold is nothing to us. What we want is water."

"Supposing some of these scouts should find all that bullion, you'd think differently," said Glen.

Spencer laughed.

"You're having a good vacation about it," he said. "We'll stay this week out since we're both having such a good time. Next week you push your Uncle Bill and his billy cart back to Ryder's farmhouse and we begin over again."

"Any time you say," agreed Glen. "Here's Goosey looking as if he was excited about something."

"Found the treasure, son?" asked Will.

"Not yet," admitted Goosey. "But I've got an idea."

"When you're looking for treasure look for signs of old water-courses. If you find one, follow it along and see if it leads to a spring."

"What good'll that do?" asked Goosey.

"Twenty dollars' worth," replied Jolly Bill. "Twenty dollars in coin of the realm. This old buried treasure may be in such shape that you can't cash it. My money will be straight goods."

"Guess I'll find the gold the Indians stole," said Goosey. "I've got a scheme, leastways Matty's got one, and he's letting me in on it."

It was not until next day that Goosey, under pressure from Chick-chick, disclosed more of Matty's wonderful scheme.

"You know, Matty's read a lot about detecting things and he knows all about how to do it."

"Yes, we ought to know about that, Goosey. See how he found the bread box."

"Well, he admits he slipped up there. But this time it's different. He says he ain't soft enough to suppose Brick Mason is giving out information to help people find the treasure when—"

"Hold on, Goosey. Thought Matt didn't believe there was any treasure. He believes whole thing fake—Matt does."

"Well, after he talked to the deptuy sheriff and found out there was a big reward offered he changed his mind. He says it ain't reasonable the Bankers' Association would offer a reward just for nothing. So then he says, of course Brick Mason's chart is a blind. Brick wants everybody to be wasting their time on a wrong scent while he goes after the real thing."

"Real clever; Matty is. Wish he was as white as Brick."

"Well, Matt's clever, anyway; no gettin' around that. What does he do to get on the right track? He goes an' hunts up the Indian—the one as told us to look for heap rock."

"Bright idea. Of course Indian wouldn't tell Matt anything but truth—he wouldn't."

"No, because Matt gave him two dollars. So Indian told him there was a cave and he wasn't sure about the treasure because he's superstitious and he's too much afraid of the dead men to look. But the cave isn't anywhere near Buffalo Creek. It's on down below."

"You mean below camp?"

"Yes, down in the woods somewhere around Vinegar Creek. You know Buffalo Creek gets pretty rapid after it passes the Ice Box. Runs down with lots of force into Vinegar Creek. It's

quite a gully down there and for five dollars more the Indian's willing to show Matt the exact place."

"Worth that much to Matty?"

"Worth it! You ain't talkin' sense. Matt doesn't need money so awful bad, but there's just two things he'd like better than anything else in the world. One is to find the treasure and so kill that everlastin' joke about the bread box. T'other's to catch the bank robbers an' so show that he's the smartest boy in camp."

"That five dollars won't get him to it—it won't."

"Well, Matt's lucky this time, as it happens. He isn't going to have to pay the Indian the five. He's found a better way. Last night he went down to kinder look things over an' he found a couple o' men camping. First off he hoped they were the robbers but they're pretty nice men and they're engineers. Matt wouldn't have told them anything but when he found they were surveyin' Vinegar Creek and goin' on up to Buffalo next he could see right off that they had good chances of runnin' right into the cave, so he gets ahead of 'em by tellin' all about it and making 'em promise equal shares if they found anything."

"Clever Matty!" exclaimed Chick-chick.

"Yes, he's clever, Matty is. No good paying

any five dollars to any Indian when he's got as good a thing as that. These engineers want to see our camp so Matty's to bring 'em up this afternoon while everybody's at the swim. He doesn't want the crowd around to be pestering 'em with questions."

When this information was carried to Jolly Bill he was more disturbed than he cared to acknowledge. He had a very well defined feeling that his scheme to restore Buffalo Lake had become common property and that these engineers were competitors. He felt some safety in the fact that he held options on the land; yet he had a strong desire to see this surveying corps and talk with the men about their work.

Thus it happened that Glen was in camp when the surveyors came—he stayed at Spencer's request to engineer the billy-cart. The engineers were young fellows, not overly clean; perhaps it was not to be expected in following such work. They were genial enough to the few people who were in camp. At first they did not seem inclined to pay much attention to Spencer, but after he had asked them one or two questions they began to take notice.

"Where are you running your levels for the Vinegar Creek survey?" asked Spencer.

"Running what?" said one.

"Oh, levels," said the other. "We haven't got to that yet."

"Find it rather hard to carry your lines through all that brush, don't you?"

"We will if we have to do it."

"What elevation do you work from?"

"We ain't quite decided. You see, we only just made camp. Mebbe we'll work up here first."

"You'll have to see Mr. Newton about that," said Spencer.

"We'll see him," said the spokesman. "We're going to look along up this creek a piece, now."

"Think perhaps you'll start your survey at an obtuse angle or an angle of sixty degrees, which?" asked Spencer gravely.

"Sixty degrees," replied the man, as if glad to get off so easily.

"Now, I'm quite sure they're no engineers," said Spencer to Glen as the two men followed Matt along the bank of Buffalo Creek. "I rather thought they weren't from the start, which is why I asked such foolish questions. Well, that relieves my anxiety about competition."

"What do you reckon they are?" asked Glen.

"Two farmer boys who want to work Matt for something, I suppose. We ought to warn him to

be on guard, but really I think a few lessons will do Matt lots of good."

"He did me a good turn yesterday," said Glen. "I'd like to put him next."

"You can try it," agreed Will. "But Matt is one of the class of people who would rather be fooled than warned."

Glen ran along after the trio. The noise of his approach caught Matt's ear and he turned with a look of disgust on his face.

"You aren't in on this," he exclaimed angrily. "These two men are my friends and our business is private."

"I just wanted to tell you something, Burton," said Glen. "I'll go back as soon as I've said it."

"Fire away," instructed Matt. "The quicker you get rid of it and go the way you came, the better."

"Come over here and I'll tell you."

"These men are my friends, I tell you. Whatever you have to say to me they can hear."

"They're not scouts," objected Glen.

"You're not much of a one," retorted Matt.

The words Glen had for Matt were not to be bawled into the ears of strangers, so he left the foolish boy to follow his own tactics. It was not too late for the swim and Glen was glad to have

at least a few minutes of his favorite sport.

He was dressing when some one tapped him on the shoulder and he looked up into the comical face of Chick-chick.

"Hey, Brick. Found something, I have," he announced.

"What is it?" asked Glen.

"Hssh! Not so loud! Don't want whole camp to know. It's secret. Footprints on sands of time."

"You're talking nonsense," said Glen.

"No nonsense about it. It's wheelprints 'stead o' footprints, that's all. Come an' see. I was chasin' butterfly down near Vinegar Creek an' I ran on it by accident, I did."

The two boys managed to slip away from the crowd and Chick-chick mysteriously led the way down the road in the direction of the heavy woods that marked the location of Vinegar Creek.

"While back I heard a car chuggin' along. Funny for car be down here, don't ye know. Then there's somethin' 'bout an engine's voice—every engine got voice of its own and you 'member it after you get 'quainted. Seemed to me I knew that voice. Looked at car an' didn't look like anything ever seen. Car all stripped off—nothing much left but chassis. Then I came down to road

an' looked at tracks. Wait bit. Soon be there, we will."

He led on for another hundred yards until they reached a point where an old woods trail struck out into the highway. Here Chick-chick paused.

"Look at this, Brick," he said. "Ever see tire-tracks look like that, did you?"

Glen looked at the tracks. They were exactly like those he had smoothed away when concealing the departure of the J. Jervice car at the ford.

"Verdict of Jury 'Guilty as charged'!" exclaimed Chick-chick, looking into his eyes. "Come on, Brick, let's follow 'long this old cow-path till we see our beloved car once more."

CHAPTER XVII

THE END OF THE JERVICE GANG

ALL that Glen could do was to follow where Chick-chick led and try to go just as noiselessly, and to flit carefully from one screen of cover to the next in just as unobtrusive a way. It was an old sport with Chick-chick, but though Glen was an amateur at it he made a very good performance.

It was not reasonable to suppose that an automobile could get very far along such a road, yet they had traveled a quarter mile before the tracks swung entirely away from the old path and followed a strip of comparatively bare ground that led in toward the creek.

"There she is!" at last Chick-chick whispered. "Don't look bit like gay old friend we left, she don't."

She did not. If it were the same car it meant that the gang, feeling that so conspicuous a mark as the J. Jervice car originally presented would be a fatal advertisement of their identity, and yet desirous of making use of the car, had stripped

it clean of the betraying top and had taken away everything that could mark it for a peddler's car.

Their plan would have worked successfully but for the betraying tires, and the sharp eye and quick mind of scout Henry Henry, commonly known as Chick-chick.

"Are you sure it's the same?" whispered Glen

"Surest thing on wheels," affirmed Chick-chick. "Bet you find drygoods in the transmission case if dare look."

"Why do you suppose they've left it here?"

"Good, safe place. Nobody see. Camp not far away, reckon. Better lay pretty low here. There's only two of us."

Late in the afternoon two tired but excited scouts found their way into camp and proceeded to disturb Mr. Newton in his afternoon study hour.

"Is it true that there's reward of five hundred dollars for the bank robbers?" one asked.

"I believe so," said Mr. Newton. "The sheriff himself and quite a few deputies are trying to earn it, too. They are covering this county and several neighboring counties, too."

"Sheriff out this way?" asked Chick-chick.

"He was in Buffalo Center this morning," replied Mr. Newton.

"We know where gang is, Mr. Newton. We want go right down get that reward, we do."

"The reward is for their apprehension, Henry. So you see you wouldn't get it, because, so far, you don't appear to have apprehended them."

Chick-chick's countenance fell, but he brightened again in a minute.

"We can do it all right, all right. Maybe better get sheriff help us."

He proceeded to tell Mr. Newton of their discovery.

"And you saw them so clearly you are quite sure they are the same men?"

"Yes, sir," replied Glen. "We located their camp by a line of smoke—leastways Chick-chick did. Then we climbed a big tree near by and looked right down on 'em. I saw Jervice and the big man, and one other man I never had seen before."

"What shall we do about this?" Mr. Newton asked of Will Spencer, who had been studying with him.

"Get 'em," replied Will, his eyes sparkling. "I wish I were more of a man, so I could help."

"Hold on, Will," said Mr. Newton, kindly. "You have just as good other work, you know. And wishing won't make you agile and active

any more than it will make these boys into grown men. What's the wise thing to do?"

"You good, old scoutmaster!" exclaimed Will. "Of course you're right. You being the only real man here the thing to do is to see if that sheriff is still at Buffalo Center."

"But you ain't going to shut us out?" cried Glen and Chick-chick in unison.

Mr. Newton and Spencer laughed at their eagerness.

"You are big fellows, both of you," said Mr. Newton. "I've no desire to rob you of your glory or reward. You must come with me to see the sheriff, or perhaps you'd better go alone on Henry's motorcycle to save time. He will have to come this way to go after the men, and I've no doubt he will want you to show the way. Perhaps he'll let me go, too. Only no foolishness, remember—no attempt at single-handed captures —no stepping in the way of a piece of heavy artillery just to show that you bear a charmed life. After you've shown the way your job will be to stay in the background."

The sheriff was still staying at Buffalo Center's little hotel. Chick-chick was disappointed to find that he did not at all come up to his ideas of a sheriff. Glen whose dealings with sheriffs had

not been so limited was not so surprised. The sheriff was so much like the other farmers lounging around the hotel office that they had to inquire for him. There was this much to say for him—he was not big, but he looked as if he might be quick and keen.

"Better come in here," said the sheriff, leading the way into the little parlor. "Now, tell me all about it."

Glen acted as spokesman, for Chick-chick was still quite excited.

"So you're the boys that got the car away from the peddler, are ye?" asked the sheriff. "I reckon ye ought to know the car an' the man too. You was expectin' to see this man Jervice, wasn't ye?"

"We were after we saw the car," Glen agreed.

"Now, don't ye reckon that mebbe, seein' the man at a distance like an' being as you was expectin' to see Jervice an' the big man, you might just imagined they was what you saw?"

"No, sir. It wasn't possible to be mistaken. We were near enough so we could both see the man very clearly."

"Well; this other fellow, now; the one you never had seen before? What did he look like?"

"Big man," said Chick-chick. "Over six foot.

Black hair, no hair on his face. I got good look once and face was all one side like this, it was."

Chick-chick drew his face to one side in a peculiar manner. Mimicry was one of his talents.

"That's the feller," said the sheriff. "If you saw him that's the gang. That was Black Coventry to the letter. There ought to be two more of 'em and the gang would be complete. You can show us the way, can you?"

The sheriff had one of his deputies with him at the hotel. He deputized two active young farmers who were present and the four started on horseback following Chick-chick's motorcycle.

They found Mr. Newton waiting at the roadside near the camp. Chick-chick began an introduction but the sheriff interrupted.

"Oh, I know Captain Newton. Remember when ye was Captain of Battery A—let's see, twelve years ago, that was. Come along of us, Captain. Ye're just the man we need an' we're short handed, anyway."

"I've no horse," objected the scoutmaster.

"Jump up back o' me. It ain't so awful far f'm what these boys say. We'll have to foot it, anyway, for quite some distance, if we want to s'prise 'em."

When the place where the wood-road turned

off was reached the sheriff decided the leave the horses.

"One o' you boys stay here now with the deputy an' help guard these horses," instructed the sheriff. "Which'll it be?"

"I guess it's Chick-chick's find," volunteered Glen. "I'll stay."

"Keep your eyes sharp open," the sheriff instructed his deputy. "If they'd get started afore we could get to their car they might slip by us. Then, there ought to be two more of 'em somewheres around, too. Might be comin' up any minute. They're slick."

After the men had gone Glen found it anxious work waiting with the deputy and the horses while Chick-chick led the sheriff's posse to glory.

"I suppose we'll hear 'em shooting most any minute," he said to the deputy.

"Mebbe we will—mebbe we won't," replied the deputy. "We won't if things go the way the old man intends."

"How is that?" asked Glen.

"There won't be any shootin' unless they's some break in his calc'lations. His way don't make much allowance for it. He'll get up there right silent an' have his men posted convenient; then he'll step out an' say 'Come along o' me,

Coventry. No good fussin'. My men got ye dead to rights.' An' mos' generally they come."

"How about the other two men?" asked Glen.

"Mebbe they're there; mebbe they ain't. It was putty clever of 'em to hide right around here, knowing they was looked for all over the country."

"Don't you suppose they're staying here so as to look for that stuff in the cave?"

"We don't take much stock in that story," said the deputy. "We don't know that they is any cave. What they was after wasn't in no river bank, it was in the bank of Buffalo Center."

He appreciated his little joke and chuckled over it very heartily. His merriment, however, did not prevent him from being the first one to see a little group coming down the main road.

"Three of 'em!" he said. "One of 'em's from your camp. Who's the other two?"

"The scout is Matt Burton," said Glen. "The other two must be the engineers that he found camping down here. Say, I'll tell you something. They aren't engineers. What's the matter with them being the other two of Jervice's gang?"

"Nothing the matter at all," said the deputy. "Lay low now, and we'll get 'em. They're looking awful suspicious like at our tracks in the road. They don't understand 'em. If they break an'

run you stay here with the horses an' I'll give 'em a chase."

"They've grabbed hold of Matt as if they were going to work some rough house play with him," said Glen. "Look what they're doing."

"They think he's sold 'em out," said the deputy. "They got a notion that he's leading 'em into something."

Just then Matt, who was not deficient in courage, made a lunge at one of the men, broke loose and started to run. He was overtaken in a minute by the other man who hit him such a blow as to stretch him full length in the dust of the road.

"Hold on there, hold on," the deputy counseled Glen. "You can't do anything chasin' after 'em. Just let 'em stay here till the sheriff gets back an' he'll pick 'em up easy. Now, take a holt o' this gun. You needn't shoot it, but it'll look better if you have one. I'm goin' to sneak up a piece and get back of 'em. I'll take this rope along an' mebbe I can git it over one of 'em. I won't be far behind 'em any time. You stay here with the hosses an' if they seem like to pass along without noticing don't you so much as cheep. All you got to do is mind the hosses."

When the two men, with Matt between them,

reached the turn of the road and saw that the tracks led directly to the camp they came to a dead halt. Glen could now hear distinctly what they said.

"It's a frame up," declared one. "This kid thinks he's smart leading us into a trap. Back we go. Nobody won't draw on us, neither. You go first, Jack. I'll be right next to you with my hands on your shoulders. This smart kid'll foller me the same way. They won't nobody try no gun play for fear of hittin' the kid. Jest as soon as we git out of range we'll make a streak for it, an' the kid'll go with us."

The man spoke in a loud voice undoubtedly for the benefit of some person or persons who might be supposed to be within bullet range and be desirous of picking them off from ambush rather than risk a personal encounter. Perhaps he had heard some warning noise. He had not made so bad a guess, for a good marksman, concealed in Glen's position, would have had them at his mercy.

Glen watched the peculiar parade as the three walked back up the road at a lockstep gait that was quite fast for unpracticed performers. He would have been glad to give some word of encouragement to Matt for he still remembered the

good turn of the day before. But his business was to watch over the horses. It would never do to betray their hiding place to these desperate men who might overpower him and be off before the deputy could reach them.

Where was that deputy?

He said that he would not be far behind the desperadoes at any time; but Glen had seen no sign of him since he slipped so quietly away with his long rope. He watched the marching figures going back along the road—farther away—farther yet. Soon they would be feeling safe out of range and would break and run.

Where was the deputy?

Glen found his answer even though he did not see his man. A long rope circled through the air. It fell neatly over the three close-locked heads and tightened suddenly as it dropped below their shoulders. There was a frantic struggle from the tied up trio and suddenly the deputy came into view belaying his rope to a tree.

Glen turned his eyes from this scene as he heard the noise of voices behind him. It was the sheriff's party returning. He waved his hand to them for speed and was glad to see the sheriff, Mr. Newton and Chick-chick start toward him

on the run. The other members of the party were evidently convoying prisoners.

One of the men in the road had freed his hands but the deputy had persuaded him to put them above his head, and stood in the road guarding his capture as the relief party came up.

"So you got 'em?" exclaimed the sheriff. "That makes the haul complete. Our three below are coming along like lambs."

"These three," said the deputy, solemnly, "being trussed up the way they is, looks more like chickens."

"Loosen up on 'em," said Glen. "That one's a scout. You could easily tell he isn't one of 'em. Didn't you see the way they knocked him over?"

"Yes. He's a scout," confirmed Mr. Newton, coming up. "He has simply been deceived by these fellows, supposing they were honest men. I hope they haven't hurt you much, Burton."

"Hurt me!" cried Matt. "They were two to one and they knocked me down but they couldn't hurt me. Let me give this big fellow just one—"

"That'll do, young fellow," said the sheriff. "These men are in the hands of the law, now. They'll get whatever's coming to 'em."

It was a triumphant procession that wound its way back to town. Three of the prisoners were

placed in their car which Chick-chick was called upon to engineer under the guardianship of the sheriff. This left Glen to ride the motorcycle alone. Still desirous to repay Matt's good turn he offered him passage but Matt preferred to ride the sheriff's horse. He was unable to understand or appreciate any friendly offers from Glen, for he felt that his share in the proceedings had been ludicrous if not contemptible and expected scant mercy from either Glen or Chick-chick. As a matter of fact, Glen would have been very glad to have his company, both that he might repay his good turn and that he might have the advantage of his experience in cycling, for Glen was a rank novice and found great difficulty in getting back to camp.

Chick-chick drove the car all the way to the little calaboose where the sheriff expected to confine the men until train time. The sheriff expressed himself under great obligations.

"I don't hardly know what to say about the reward, son," he said. "It'll have to split up a good many ways so there won't be an awful big slice for any one of us."

"I'll leave it to you," agreed Chick-chick, magnanimously. "Maybe you'd let me speak word to Jervice."

"Sure I will. You can talk a book into his ear if you like. But that ain't sayin' as he'll say anything to you."

The sheriff had guessed correctly. Mr. J. Jervice was singularly uncommunicative.

"What's meanin' of 'Twin Elms' and 'Deep Springs'?" asked Chick-chick.

Mr. Jervice shook his head at such foolishness.

"You won't get any good out of it," insisted the inquisitive boy. "Give me your chart now and I'll use influence with Judge to get you easy sentence, I will."

Mr. Jervice shook his head and turned away.

"What's that young fool saying about 'Twin Elms' and 'Deep Springs'?" asked the big leader.

Mr. Jervice muttered something in reply.

"You take it from me, young feller," said the man, angrily. "The thing you'd orter do is to git them names out o' your mind. They ain't no such places."

Chick-chick went back to receive the adulation of the camp but he was not satisfied.

CHAPTER XVIII

GLEN AND APPLE FIND THE CAVE

AS might be expected, the excitement in camp that evening was intense. Chick-chick and Brick Mason were heroes. No one could do too much for them. Even Will Spencer was excited.

"It's a fine thing for you, Glen," he said. "I'm glad you had the chance and that you did so well with it. Mr. Newton says the sheriff will give you and the deputy full credit for the capture of the two fellows that came down with Matt."

"I'm mighty tickled," Glen admitted. "I don't think it'll amount to so very much, though, because there's so many will have to divide the reward."

"Brick, Brick, where did you get that head?" exclaimed Jolly Bill. "I'm not talking about the reward. Can't you see anything better than that?"

"Why, I don't know that I do. I'm afraid I never will be smart."

"Yes, you will. You're getting too much for

me already. But, don't you see, old brick head, how much better chance this gives you to get your discharge from the reform school? 'Single-handed, he engaged in a terrific conflict with two desperadoes and delivered them into the hands of the officers of the law.' How does that sound? You begin to see where you get off?"

"Maybe so. All I did was to hold the horses, but I'll be glad of any credit that comes to me. I expected we'd hear from the school before now."

"Don't you fear but what you'll hear quick enough. Your friend who was here last Sunday is looking after your interests or they'd have yanked you back before now. I only hope they let you stay another week or two so you'll do me some good."

"I surely hope they do," said Glen. "I'm having such a fine time I wish it would go on forever. You think you'll get along all right while I go up the Mound to-night?"

"I'll be all right. Bob and I will keep the camp from running away. Maybe it'll rain again, like it did when you tried it Sunday night. You'll be mighty glad to get back to us if it does."

"No, we're going to stick it out to-night whatever happens," said Glen. "The fellows are going to take their ponchos and stay all night

whatever the weather. Going clear to the top of Buffalo Mound. I'm going with Apple and he has a waterproof sleeping bag big enough for two. We're going to have a great time. I tell you, Will, this camp life with people like Apple and the scoutmaster and you is more like heaven than anything I ever dreamed of."

A great deal of satisfaction and joy had come into Glen Mason's life in the last few days. He felt it in the companionship of Apple and Chick-chick as they marched up Buffalo Mound together that night, carrying their firewood and blankets for the bivouac. There was a new bond of fellowship between them, a bond which Glen would have found it quite impossible to state in words but which was none the less genuine and fixed. The little service at the camp-fire meant more to him than anything he had ever experienced; he had really started his journey, he was definitely lined up with God's people, he had enlisted for actual service. In the few quiet minutes while he lay wrapped in his blanket waiting for sleep to come, and meanwhile looking up at the starry vault which seemed to him to represent God's heaven, he experienced the greatest peace that had ever come into his life.

Only hardened campaigners and boys can sleep

the dreamless sleep of nature next to mother earth, with no soft mattress to pad the irregular outlines of bony prominences, and even boys are apt to waken earlier than common. So it is no wonder that daybreak found Glen and Apple glad to shake themselves free from their blankets and climb the few feet necessary to get the best of the justly celebrated view from Buffalo Mound. Miles and miles over the flat prairie country could they see in the clear morning air, and with the assistance of Mr. Newton's field glass they could draw far away objects very near to their field of vision. It was interesting to see the little towns, each with its two or three church spires, its one or two large buildings and its collection of dwellings; to see eight towns in six different counties from the same spot was an exciting experience for these boys.

But they did not get their real excitement until they turned their glass down the west side of the Mound, and there came in the range of their vision an Indian engaged in some mysterious occupation on the bank of Buffalo Creek.

"He's at the Ice Box," declared Apple. "Now what do you suppose that Indian's doing? Look at him dive."

"How can he stay under so long?" asked Glen,

after they had watched two or three minutes without seeing a head appear.

"I can't tell you. Maybe he swam under water and has come up in some other place that we can't see."

But fully ten minutes later, while they still watched in great curiosity, his head came into sight at about the place where he had dived in, and a moment later they saw him draw his glistening body out of the water.

"Where's he been?" said Apple. "He hasn't been under water all that time."

"But neither did he come up anywhere that I could see," said Glen. "I know what's happened," he added in an excited tone. "He's been in the cave."

"I believe you," said Apple. "We guessed right. Ice Box and Deep Springs mean the same place. I don't know about any Twin Elms but that cave is there, at the Ice Box. I don't know why we never saw it, unless because it's on the far bank and we always looked this side."

"Maybe its entrance is under water," suggested Glen. "That Indian dived, you see, and we didn't see a sign of him again until he came back."

"That's the way of it, Glen. And that's the same Indian told us to look for heap rock. I

believe—" it was the romantic side of Apple now appearing—"I believe he is the tribal guardian of the treasure and he stays around here to guard it from our search."

"Maybe so," agreed Glen. "Anyway if the treasure's there we'll soon know it. You think you can keep in your head the exact location where he dived?"

"Yes. It's just at the bend of the Ice Box. Right opposite on the other bank are those two old stumps—"

"Hold on," shouted Glen excitedly, seized with a great idea. "I'll bet you those are the stumps of elm trees—the Twin Elms."

"You're right, Glen. I'm sure you're right. I can hardly wait to find out."

"We don't want all the camp following us into this. When will be the best time to hunt for it?"

"What's the matter with right now?" suggested Apple. "It's only a little after five. Breakfast won't be called until eight. Father won't care where we go so long as we get to camp in time for breakfast."

"But the Indian! What will he be doing while we explore his cave?"

"He won't be there. He hiked through the

timber, and he's less likely to be there now than he would be later on in the day."

"It's all right with me," declared Glen. "Now's as good as any time. We'll get our blankets and tell your father we will be at camp in time for breakfast."

When a couple of boys have a great secret which they have just discovered they are likely to overdo the secrecy of it. Glen and Apple made a wide detour through the fields and when they at last approached the Ice Box it was from an entirely different angle. Taking warning from the exposure of the Indian they took off their clothes in the shelter of some bushes and made a quick rush into the water.

"Be careful, now," warned Apple. "It's cold as ice and swift as the rapids. Must be some big springs around here."

But Glen was always at home in the water and needed no warning.

"Here it is, I'll bet," he cried. "Just under the ledge, you see. The opening's only about two feet wide and the space above water to the ledge isn't more than a foot and a half. That's why it's all covered up when the water's high. Come on. Let me go first."

Once inside this narrow passage they were

indeed in a cave. For a few feet around the small opening daylight shone dimly in, but it was lost in impenetrable gloom above and to the rear. A mass of something dense loomed in front of them and Apple swimming boldly up declared it to be a pile of stone.

"It's the heap stone the Indian spoke about, Brick," he shouted. "We've sure found it. Let's go back and get some lanterns and things."

Out in the broad light of day the romance did not seem quite so absolutely sure, and the nearer they drew to the camp the less positive did they become about their discovery.

"We wouldn't like the camp to have the laugh on us like they did on Matt," admitted Apple. "I guess we'd better make sure before we have very much to say about it."

"I reckon we had," Glen agreed. "We can keep it to ourselves for awhile without anybody carrying it away. That Indian couldn't carry it very far by himself. Once we are sure, then we can tell the whole camp. Wish we could find Chick-chick. We could tell him right now."

It was a hard thing to be discreetly silent until their opportunity for thorough search came, and fortunate that they had not long to wait. That very afternoon it rained and most of the boys

stayed in camp. Chick-chick was still away on some mysterious errand. Glen and Apple appeared clad in bathing suits and tennis shoes.

"We don't mind the rain," Apple announced. "We are going out. Look for us when you see us."

They had already cached a couple of lanterns, a pick and two spades near the Ice Box and it was no trick at all to get them into the cave. With the lighted lanterns they could get a better idea of their surroundings. The floor of the cave was waist deep in water which seemed to rush on in a swift current and escape again into the creek through a counter opening a few feet away. The cave was quite long. It did not, as they supposed, have its beginning at the opening where they entered, but extended some distance back into the gloom, and as the current was quite swift back there it was evident that there were other hidden openings. The vault of the cave was high, so high that they could not see the top by the feeble light of their lanterns. But the thing that they could see and that thrust from their minds every other subject was a solid arch of masonry.

"I was right!" shouted Apple. "I was right! That's no natural formation. That has been

built up by men's hands years ago. It's sure to be the hiding place of the treasure. What else could it be?"

"It couldn't be anything else," agreed Glen. "We'll mighty soon see. Get up to the top and I'll hand you the things."

"I'm up," said Apple. "Are you coming too?"

"Sure thing. The way to tear this down is a stone at a time beginning at the top."

"Let me have the pick, then."

"No, you hold the lantern and let me use the pick. I'm the biggest."

Splash! The first big stone disappeared in the water. Another splash and the second followed. But prying them loose was no easy job and they did not follow one after the other in the rapid succession the boys would have liked. In less than half an hour they decided that an enormous lot of work had been done in the effort to bury the treasure.

"We think this is pretty hard work getting these stones loose and pitching 'em down in the water," said Apple, reflectively, "but think of carrying all of 'em in from outside to build this."

"Perhaps there were more than two to do it," said Glen.

"Of course there were," said the more romantic

Apple, his imagination stirred by the picture. "There was a small army of them. I can imagine I see them coming in here in a long procession each carrying his load, giving way to the next, and slipping away quietly in the gloom."

"Perhaps they didn't do that way at all," said Glen, the practical. "If you swing your lantern away up you can see that this cave has high ledges running away back. Perhaps they managed to get rock from some of those ledges."

"Perhaps they did. But it was hard work, anyway, and it's hard work breaking it up. But if we can just manage to do this just by our two selves, and then go back to the fellows and tell 'em we've found the treasure—"

"Say, that will be fine," agreed Glen.

Suddenly there was a splash at the entrance.

"Hush!" said Glen. "Somebody's coming."

"It's the Indian!" he whispered, a sudden terror seizing him.

"Worse than that!" said Apple, as he saw the figure that minute outlined against the entrance. "Worse than that!" he repeated with a severity unusual in his gentle speech. "It's Matt Burton!"

CHAPTER XIX

BURIED IN THE CAVE

THE two boys looked suspiciously at Matt as he advanced, but neither words of cheer nor resentment came to their lips. A few days ago Glen's greeting would have been quick and stinging. His silence spoke well for the first lessons of self-control. Apple felt so keenly Matt's injustice to Glen that the cordiality which was his natural offering to good and bad alike was completely choked.

But another splash caused all three to turn their looks again to the entrance and in a moment another head bobbed in sight. It was Chick-chick this time.

"'Lo, fellers!" he called out cheerfully. "D'ye know it's rainin' in solid sheets outside. Jest had to get in out of it. Old Matt, he's follerin' you. I's follerin' Matt. He dived. I dived. 'Tain't much drier in here than outside but anyway ye don't need umbrellas. Mighty little bit of openin' ye came through there. Skinned me elbow, I did."

"Come up here, Chick-chick," invited Apple. "We can use you. It's dry up here. And I don't know why you came, Matt, but since you're here you might as well help, too."

"I came to see what you were doing," said Matt. "I knew you didn't go out of camp in your bathing suits just for nothing and anyway I wanted to see if I could track you."

"Didn't bring your bread-box 'long, did ye, Matt?" asked Chick-chick innocently.

"Maybe I'd have better luck finding things if I was a confederate of those that hid them."

Was Matt trying to intimate that Glen had found the cave because of some confederacy with the Jervice gang? Glen felt his anger rising.

"That's enough of that," said Apple. "If you fellows want to help you can take turns one on top and one in the water. Come on up, Chick-chick."

With four pairs of hands they made quicker progress. Both the additional workers were strong and active, and Matt especially was urged on by the desire to show that he could do as much or a little more than any one else. Suddenly he stopped in his work and looked about in evident perplexity.

"What's the matter?" asked Apple. "Too

much cold water? Maybe you'd better get out of it for awhile."

"Yes, there's too much of it, and it's too cold too. But what's bothering me is why there's so much. It was up to my waist when I began work. Then I threw down a big rock a foot high and stood on it and now it's more than waist high again. It must be rising."

"I thought we were getting this pile pulled down awfully quick," said Glen. "That's what's made it. The water has risen up to cover it."

Chick-chick straightened himself up and looked around in the gloom. Then he lifted the lantern by the light of which he had been working and swung it far over his head.

"Where's the opening we came in at?" he shouted.

They all looked in the direction where they expected it to be but not even the faintest glimmer of daylight shone in to tell of an opening.

"Do you suppose we've worked away here so long that it has got to be dark without our knowing it?" asked Apple.

"No. 'Tisn't more'n an hour since Matt and I invited ourselves in," objected Chick-chick. "Wasn't much past four then."

"It's the rising water," said Matt. "I was

so busy and it came up so gradually I didn't notice it. The creek must be rising from the heavy rain."

"Another thing is we've thrown so much rock and rubbish down there that we've probably choked up that outlet below. There's no sign of it now," observed Glen.

"Say, fellers, I'm gettin' homesick," said Chick-chick. "Let's get out o' here."

"All right for me, Chick-chick," said Apple. "I'm not much of a swimmer in the dark. You lead the way."

"Not for Chick-chick. I'm no water-witch nor a pathfinder, I ain't. 'Twouldn't do for humble bug-hunter to take such honor. Let Matt and Brick draw straws for it."

"I'm willing to try it," Glen volunteered.

"I'm not afraid of it," said Matt, his natural bravery pushing him to the front at such a crisis. "Let me try."

"I hold big rock in one hand an' little rock in t'other. Fellow that guesses big rock goes," said Chick-chick.

"Right!" said Matt.

"An' Brick guesses left," said Chick-chick for Glen. "Matt gets the try."

Matt waited for no counsel.

"I know just about where the opening lies," he said, stepping on the pile of masonry. "I'll dive clear through the passage."

With a quick spring he disappeared beneath the turbid water.

The boys waited an anxious minute, swinging their lanterns far out over the current. Suddenly Glen thrust the lantern he held into Apple's hand and made a quick jump into the swirl of waters. He was up in a moment with a heavy burden.

"It's Matt!" he cried. "I saw his hand sticking out of the water and jumped for it. He's hurt himself."

The boys were down by his side in a moment, Apple holding a lantern high above his head.

"We must get him up on one of those ledges," said Glen. "He's breathing, but he isn't conscious."

It would have been a hard task under ordinary circumstances, but in their excitement the three scouts made light work of it. One ledge shelved down toward the water making their ascent easier, and from there they managed to lift the injured boy still higher, well out of reach of the water.

Blood was pouring persistently from a wound

in the scalp, but with his knowledge of "first aid" Apple was able to stop this quickly by making pressure. They had no bandage material of any description but they took turns in making pressure with their fingers until the blood seemed inclined no longer to flow and the wound showed a tendency to be covered by a firm clot. Matt came to himself for a few minutes, spoke a few half-conscious words and then drifted off again into quiet; but this time it seemed more like the quiet of sleep so they made no effort to disturb him.

"He must have hit his head against something pretty sharp when he dived," said Glen. "I'll go more carefully and just swim gently along the side where the opening ought to be and reach out with my hands for it."

But while they were attending Matt the water had made a very appreciable rise. It would scarcely be possible to feel along the edges now. The water was too high.

"I'll have to swim under water, fellows," said Glen.

"Don't ye do it, Brick," advised Chick-chick. "You don't want to chance Apple and me having to make another rescue, with Matt on our hands already."

"You won't have to make any rescue. I'll swim easily and feel well in front of me."

"I don't like you to try it," said Apple. "We'd be in an awful fix if anything happened to you. There's no danger of the water coming up on these ledges, and it's bound to go down when the rain is over and the creek drops."

"Cheerful lookout, waiting here for that," said Glen. "The folks at the camp will go crazy if we don't show up by night. I've got to get out to carry the news and get help for Matt."

He jumped into the water without further argument and soon they could dimly see him feeling his way along the edge of the cave. It seemed a terribly long time before he came back.

"Haven't found it yet," he said with an attempt at cheer. "It seems as if it ought to be easy enough to find a two foot opening but the top shelves down pretty sharp just there and the opening is now probably five or six feet from the surface. It's mighty discouraging to swim around under there and not find anything. I must rest up a bit."

"Why are you putting that light out, Chick-chick?" asked Apple.

"We c'n see jest's well with one as two, an'

I've an idea we may need it wuss later on," replied Chick-chick, significantly.

"You're not getting scared, Chick-chick?" said Glen.

"No, I'm not gettin' scared. I'm just tryin' to use me thinker a bit. We got a boy here that may need 'tention. Won't do to be without light. You fellers got any matches?"

"Yes, I have some," said Apple. "I've kept 'em dry, too."

"All right, then. If Brick has to quit experimentin' in the water without findin' anything, we'll put out t'other light, too, an' just use 'em when we need 'em. This water's goin' to go down sooner or later, but while we have to wait a light when we need it will be awfully handy."

"I'm not through, yet," said Glen. "As soon as I find that opening I'll run to camp and get a rope, and we'll have you fellows out in no time. I've got marks outside to show me how to get back in all right."

Glen stayed away longer the next time, but he came back, shivering and exhausted.

"I'm afraid it's no good for awhile, fellows," he admitted. "Once I thought I had it but a big log barred the way. Then I thought I'd feel

where the current rushed in strongest and try there, but it's strong everywhere."

Just then Matt stirred and tried to rise but was held back by Apple.

"My head aches!" he murmured. "I can't find it."

"All right, Matty, old boy. You did your best. Lie back and go to sleep."

"I've slept enough," he declared. "What's the matter? Didn't we get out of that cave?"

"No. But it's all right. We'll get out after awhile. You just lie back."

"I'm all right now. Let me up. I remember diving and that's all. Who pulled me out of the water?"

"It was Brick, and it's just as good you should know it," said Apple. "He saw your hand waving around and jumped for you."

"It was easy enough," said Glen. "The water was only about shoulder high then."

"I would have done it for you," said Matt. "But I don't know that you had any cause to do it for me. It makes me feel pretty small after I've been such a beastly prig. I'll get even with you some way but I don't know how. Let me try diving for that hole again."

"Too big hole in yer head," objected Chick-

chick. "The water 'd wash all your brains out. Awful strong current down there."

"Better not stir much," counseled Apple. "There's quite a bad cut you've got on top and we had a time getting the bleeding stopped. If you move about much you're likely to unsettle the clot and start it again. Better lie still."

"But I'm not just going to lie down and die here. I want to get out."

"Easy now, Matt. You don't help us by acting that way and you won't help us if you get your head started again either. Look at that water. Brick's worked in it till he's just about all in. You can't do any better than he."

"Who says I can't?" he cried, bristling at once.

"I'd say you can't if 'twould do any good," replied Chick-chick. "That's no way to act at such time 's this. Ye ain't bein' like a man or a Christian. See, ye've started the blood again and it's trickling down your face. Now lie down."

In the face of such conditions Matt had sense enough to desist from further opposition. He lay down again and soon the bleeding stopped.

"Chick-chick," he said, in subdued tones. "I give you leave to kick me if I act the fool again."

"There wouldn't be any pleasure in it, now," said Chick-chick. "Hold your offer till we get t'

camp if ye want t' please me. What I say is let's put all lights out and everybody go to sleep."

"Suppose the water comes up on us," objected Matt.

"It won't. It can't rise much higher'n the creek level an' we're way above it now. Let's go to sleep."

"I can't," Matt still objected.

"What's matter? Head hurt ye?"

"Not so much. And I don't mind it so bad when we're all awake talking, but I'm afraid to have us go to sleep."

"You 'fraid, Brick?"

"No," said Glen. "I'm too tired."

"You 'fraid, Apple?"

"No, I'm scared, but I'm not afraid. But I don't wonder so much at Matt. I know how I'd be if I didn't know God had a firm hold of me, right now. Let's sing a little."

He started a familiar camp song, and from one song they went to another. When they were singing "Where He leads me I will follow" Chick-chick held up his hand.

"Matt's asleep," he whispered. "I'll bet his head's made him 'bout half crazy. Hope he sleeps till morning."

How many hours they slept they could not tell,

for there were no timepieces. They would rouse, turn over, and drop asleep again, for each one was determined to sleep away as much of the waiting time as possible. It was probably early morning when at last Glen arose, stretched himself and carefully lighted a lantern.

"It's going down, boys," he announced. "The opening isn't uncovered yet, but it's two or three feet lower than it was last night."

They were all wide awake now, and all leaned over the ledge to form their own opinion.

"The current seems to run differently," said Glen. "It acts as if the rock we threw in has stopped up the old outlet and it was running back of the heap we pulled down instead."

"Yes, sir. Strikes me just that way," said Chick-chick.

"I'm going to take the other lantern and explore a little," said Glen. "You fellows needn't come. I'll holler if I find anything."

He disappeared behind the ruined arch, swimming and wading, but he was back in a minute, all excitement.

"There's a regular passage out this way, fellows. Seems to go clear through the Mound. The water's rushing down in a torrent. Come and see."

They needed no invitation, for they were down before he finished speaking. Around the crumbled masonry he led them, and pointed to an opening like a natural tunnel which seemed to lead far into the bowels of the earth.

CHAPTER XX

THE TREASURE OF BUFFALO LAKE

THE cavernous opening into which the boys swung their lanterns in a vain attempt to penetrate its gloom seemed indeed to lead into the heart of Buffalo Mound. A muddy, turbulent stream was rushing down it at a tremendous rate, but there was room enough left to allow the passage of an agile boy, willing to bend himself double, and the water was not deep enough to be an obstacle.

"It may show us a way out," exclaimed Glen. "I'm bound to see where it goes. Who'll go with me?"

"We'll all go, Brick. You don't leave me behind in this dark cave, you don't," declared Chick-chick.

"How about your head, Matt?" asked Apple.

"It's good enough now," said Matt. "I'm sure going to be along on this."

With Glen in the lead they crept one after another along the narrow passage, Apple bringing up the rear and trailing behind him the cumbersome pick. At a place where the passage widened

out into a roomy vault which gave space for them to stand erect Glen halted the little company and pointed onward to show how the tunnel, leaving this vault, suddenly seemed to narrow so that there was scarcely room for a head above water.

"It's going to be pretty risky here, fellows. I think we'd better go one at a time. I'll crawl as far as I can. If I don't come back while you count a hundred let Chick-chick crawl after me. If I'm stuck or choked he can pull on my feet and pull me back. Then Matt can do the same for him and Apple for him. I'll either get through or be back by the time you count a hundred."

It seemed a long count, and it was hard for them to keep from unseemly hurry. At ninety Chick-chick got down on his knees in the tunnel and as Apple said "One hundred" he disappeared. Matt and Apple counted again and this time it was Matt who disappeared, and Apple was left alone. But he stuck bravely to his counting until another hundred was numbered, then he pushed his pick ahead of him and crawled into the passage, his head scraping the top, his lips scarcely an inch above the swiftly moving water. It seemed a long time before the passage widened,

but there were no obstacles, and in a little while he crawled into a larger space where the three dripping boys were waiting for him.

"There's a light away on ahead," announced Glen. "I believe it's daylight."

It was almost a race after that. Nothing was considered in their mad rush, and at every turn the light ahead became clearer until Glen, still in the lead, made a turning and gave a great shout. The next moment all of them could see unmistakable daylight shining through a small opening.

Glen was lying at full length in the stream, trying to enlarge the opening with his hands, when they reached him.

"It's Buffalo Hollow!" he cried. "We've come clear through the Mound. This opening isn't big enough to let any of us in or out, but the water's going out in a good stream now, and soon it will make Buffalo Lake."

Apple's pick was brought into use and with its aid the boys made the opening large enough to scramble through one after the other.

It was scarcely break of day; the sun was just showing signs of rising for his daily task. Oh, how good it felt to be out there in full liberty, able to look around and see all the beautiful things

of God's creation; how good to be able to stand erect and stretch out every muscle. Apple had scarcely found his feet before he was off at break-neck speed in the direction of the camp.

"He wants his father should know he's safe," explained Chick-chick, as they looked after the flying figure. "Come on, Brick. They'll be worrying about us, too. You better keep close, Matt. You're head might go bad, it might."

Apple was the center of an excited crowd of scouts for there had been no sleep in camp that night. Already they were wigwagging the news of the discovery.

"There's a big smoke all ready to be started on top o' the Mound," explained a scout. "Soon as they get our message they'll start it and then everybody will know and they'll all come in."

Almost as he spoke the signal shot out its flames and smoke and in less than twenty minutes the scoutmaster was folding his son in his embrace and wildly shaking the hands of his lost scouts.

Glen was not there. He had gone quietly into the tent where he had expected to find his friend Spencer.

"Good old scout!" cried Will, as he wrung his hand. "You've been giving me more worry than all the rest of my children put together, but I for-

give everything now you have returned. Wherever you've been I hope this will be a lesson to you and you'll never go treasure hunting again."

Glen's reply was startling.

"There is no need," he said. "The treasure is found!"

"Found again!" shouted Spencer. "Where? In a bread-box?"

"No, sir. No bread-box this time. Found in the heart of Buffalo Mound. It is pouring into Buffalo Hollow now and by this time to-morrow there will once more be a Buffalo Lake!"

With the crowd of people who came from town to see the marvel of the refilling of Buffalo Lake was a skillful surgeon. He examined Matt's scalp-wound.

"I can fix that up with the aid of the scoutmaster's first aid kit," he announced. "You'll need a few stitches but I guess you are man enough to stand that."

"I can stand it," said Matt. "But have all the fellows go away so they won't hear me if I holler."

"All but one or two," agreed the doctor. "I'll need one or two boys to hold things."

"Use the fellows who were with me, then?" asked Matt. "They know just about how foolish

I can be so it won't be anything new to them."

The doctor laughed.

"That's the way heroes talk sometimes," he said. "I'm glad to hear you say it."

"They know all about me being a hero," said Matt. "But they know I learned something in that cave."

"All ready, now," said the doctor. "You hold the bowl," he said to Apple. "And now that you have scrubbed your hands you may hold this pan of instruments," he said to Chick-chick. "And I guess we haven't anything for you to hold," to Glen.

"He's going to be the anesthetic," said Matt. "Take hold of my hands, Brick, and if I holler, punch me."

It was the first time he had addressed Glen by the name which had become so familiar to the others, and both knew that in the word all differences were swept away.

That day there was great rejoicing all through the camp at the return of the lost boys, great rejoicing at the success that seemed sure to come to the plans of Jolly Bill Spencer, and mingled with the rejoicing an underlying vein of excited speculation whether a close search of the cave would not disclose the ancient treasure of bullion

or at the very least some booty stored there by the robber band.

Tom Scoresby again headed a delegation to approach the scoutmaster for permission to explore the cave.

"What do you think?" asked Mr. Newton. "Who has first right there—who are the discoverers?"

"Apple and Brick and maybe Chick-chick and Matty," replied honest Tom. "But I reckon they wouldn't want to keep us out."

"It isn't my cave," disclaimed Matt, who sat there with his head swathed in bandages. "I just butted in. I got all that was coming to me."

" 'Tain't mine," said Chick-chick. "But if there's any treasure I want some, I do."

Glen and Apple only laughed, but Mr. Newton felt that he could speak for them.

"This is Sunday, boys," he declared. "No one will run away with that cave over night. I don't think that Indian will be back in a hurry. Tomorrow, after camp drill, all first class scouts—the good swimmers—may explore the cave. Mr. Spencer claims the water rights. All bullion and other treasure found and not claimed by the authorities will be shared alike by all in the camp."

Monday morning found the whole camp at the

Ice Box. The stream still was high so that it was no easy matter to gain access to the cave, but no scout who had passed the swimming test for "first class" thought of shirking the attempt. Mr. Newton himself led the way and Glen and Apple were not far behind.

The many lights relieved the pitchy darkness of the cave enough to show the high ledges that ran still further back into the gloom.

"We will explore these ledges one at a time," said Mr. Newton. "Let every scout make sure of his footing before he steps. Don't get excited."

Alas! there was unfortunately little to create excitement. Farm products—potatoes—bacon—several suits of clothes—old pipes—several tools—pieces of chain—bottles that once had held liquor—even an old straw hat; but of treasure that could create even a moment's excitement there seemed to be none.

"I know who brought this collection here," said Apple. "The Indian! It's his treasure house all right, and that's why he went in here that morning."

"That's all right," said Tom Scoresby, "but there ought to be a lot of real treasure around here. If no bullion, anyway there ought to be the bank robber's stuff."

But all their searching was of no avail. When they returned through the narrow opening they went empty handed.

Waiting on the bank with the younger boys was Matt Burton. He had not been allowed to enter the cave for fear that the swim under water might infect his wound. He was greatly disappointed at their failure and, since characteristics do not change over night, it is not surprising that he had a very strong opinion that if their party had been increased by just one member the result would have been different. Let this be said of Matt—he tried to conceal this feeling.

"Where d'ye look, Brick?" he asked.

"We explored every ledge and went into places that grown men couldn't have squeezed through."

"Did you dig?"

"There isn't much chance to dig. The inside of the cave is a shale that no one could dig into. It would have to be blasted."

"Then there must have been some holes or something—oh, say, did you lift up that shelf of rock we lay on that night?"

"No, we didn't find any loose rock to lift."

"That rock was loose. I remember how it seemed to tip when we moved. In all I've read about treasure there never was any left just on

top of the ground, except in Treasure Island, and even that was buried until Ben Gunn carried it to the cave. I'd like to look under that rock."

"We'll go back with you, Matty," chorused a dozen scouts, only too glad of further exploration.

"Mr. Newton, the water's gone down so much I'm sure I can get through without wetting my head. Please let me try it," begged Matt.

"If ye don't he'll be so excited his brains'll spill out o' that gash, they will," urged Chick-chick.

"I'll give him all the help he needs," offered Glen.

"I'll go along myself," said Mr. Newton. "I guess we can manage him between us."

So back the whole expedition went convoying Matty to the cave. He led them straight to the ledge of rock and the stamp of a foot was enough to show its lack of balance.

The boys were greatly excited—even Mr. Newton showed immense interest.

"Use the pickaxes to pry, boys. Get under these loose corners," directed the scoutmaster. "Tom and Glen, you two are the strongest—one at each corner now."

The broad slab of rock started easily enough

at their energetic effort. A seam appeared to widen—a crack was disclosed—there followed space sufficient to allow a hand to be inserted and then a dozen willing scouts helped with the lift. In a couple of minutes the big slab was thrown over with a crash, and below appeared a cavity that was evidently the work of men's hands.

Dark as Erebus was the interior, baffling the peering eyes of the scouts, until Mr. Newton, hanging a lantern on each point of a pickax, dangled it into the depths. A vault some four or five feet deep and running far back into the cave was disclosed. It was partly filled with an assortment almost as miscellaneous as the treasure left on the ledges by the Indian; a riding saddle, an old coat, several pieces of artillery, some tools which may have been accessory to the trade of burglary, and scattered among these things many articles of personal property which were undoubtedly of great value.

But the thing upon which the eyes of the scouts rested with greatest interest was a metal box, probably secured from some bank, which rested conspicuously on the top of the plunder.

"Matt and Glen get first selection," said Mr. Newton. "It's their find, whatever it is."

"We'll take the box," said the boys.

Although not of great size the box was rather heavy, but its handling was no task for two such athletes. To the great disappointment of all it was locked.

"Never mind," said Mr. Newton. "We will open it when we get to camp. Now the rest of you take each what you can carry. Bear in mind that the question of property rights in this discovery is not to be considered at present. That will come later. All we do now is to carry it to camp."

They made a queer procession as they came one by one through the small opening. Matt and Glen came first pushing their box ahead of them on the raft which had been used in bringing over their tools and lanterns. The scouts who followed in their wake found it no easy matter to keep their treasure clear of the water as they crossed the swift little stream.

"These robbers chose safe place for their plunder all right, all right," said Chick-chick to Apple, "but mighty inconvenient, it is."

"I don't see why they did it," Apple replied. "They ought to have rented a safety deposit box in some bank."

From the other bank their passage was watched not only by the excited group of younger scouts

but by three new arrivals. They were the sheriff, a deputy and Mr. J. Jervice.

"The kids has found the loot," exclaimed Mr. Jervice. "They're bringing it over now."

"I guess I'll have to take care o' that stuff for you, Cap," said the sheriff to Mr. Newton.

"It's just as you say," replied Mr. Newton. "We would hardly have known the proper thing to do with it. But I want to notify you that if there is any reward for its recovery we claim it."

"We'll see you get it," said the sheriff. "This man Jervice tells us that there's a lot o' valuable bonds and securities in the box. That's what they was down here after, mostly. Jervice thought we'd let him off if he gave the story away to us. The old gang got the location of the cave from an Indian, but Jervice couldn't find the Indian."

"The Indian's gone," said Mr. Newton. "I doubt if he ever comes back. There's a lot of stuff in the cave yet and you'd better get a boat and a wagon. Some of the scouts will help you."

CHAPTER XXI

WHAT BECAME OF THEM

THE morning of the fourth day found the water still flowing into the lake in a steady stream.

"It's a sure thing now," said Spencer. "I must get to town and arrange to close up those options and organize the Buffalo Lake Summer Colony. I'm not going to tell you how much I expect to clear on this deal, but your share won't be less than a thousand dollars."

"It will be enough to buy mother a home!" said Glen.

"That's the thought, boy. And we'll see if we can't get you paroled from the school so you can live at home and work for her. I'm going back with you to the school, myself, but I believe that war-correspondent friend of yours has matters moving already."

The war-correspondent friend, taking an unusual interest in the case, had been doing his best, but he had found it a case of many complications. That very day, however, he had re-

ceived an official communication of favorable tone from his friend, the Superintendent.

"The Board of Control," wrote the Superintendent, "finds in the case of Glen Mason some very unusual and delicate features. It is not the desire of the Board to reward a boy for running away by granting him an unconditional parole. Neither is it their desire to keep in the institution a boy who has been found worthy of parole privileges. In this case the boy voluntarily offers to return. Not only so but he has undergone such a transformation that he returns as a reformed character. Furthermore he has rendered a service to the State in assisting in the apprehension of two dangerous characters. Added to all this he is greatly needed at home for the support which a boy of his age and intelligence can give to his mother. In consideration of all these things the Board is inclined to grant a parole subject to the usual conditions."

In a personal note which accompanied this letter the Superintendent made a few additional remarks to his old friend.

"Another rather unusual element is that Mason's running away has been altogether too well done. He has been too fortunate. Usually such a boy would get into bad hands and go from

bad to worse. It would never do for us to have him back at the school telling about all his good times and how he was to have a thousand dollars for his part in discovering this wonderful lake about which you phoned me this morning. Every boy in the school would be keen to try the adventure. I am glad for Glen that he has surrendered his life to God's guidance and I know that he has found the one real, safe way of life. So I surrender him gladly, and I feel sure that you and Mr. Newton will not forget your promises of guidance and support."

Glen went home with Will Spencer to stay with him while he wound up his business affairs and disposed of his options on the Buffalo Lake property to a syndicate.

"I'm going to take you out to see an old friend, Glen," said Spencer one day. "I still have a great deal of business to care for before I can go away. You know I want to go to that famous hospital, where, if they can't make a whole man of me, they will make me look and walk like one just the same. I can't go yet, but I have something planned for you right this very day. It's a surprise."

They traveled along a road that was vaguely familiar and after a few miles Glen recognized

that they were drawing near the Gates' home. They were evidently expected, for the whole family ran out to greet them.

"It seems mighty good to get back here," said Glen. "I wish I could stay as long as I liked but I must get away and finish that trip home that I told you I was making."

"Would you like to stay here, Glen?" asked Mr. Gates.

"I surely would," replied Glen.

"Would you like to stay and work with me and learn how to run a farm?"

"I don't know anything I'd like better."

"Step out here into the road with me. Do you see that cottage at the corner? It was empty when you were here. It is a tenant cottage which I rent to the man who works for me. Yesterday there moved into there a very nice lady with a little girl and a little boy. There is an older brother whom they are expecting, who is coming here to work for me. Run—"

But he did not need to tell Glen to run along. Ever since he had been given a new heart and a new life he had felt a yearning for the mother of whom he had been so unworthy. He wanted to tell her that he was a different boy, to show her that he was worthy of trust, to shoulder her

burdens, to relieve her of responsibilities, to turn the bitter years into sweet. He did not run, but he walked with a swift and steady gait, with erect head and a clear resolve in his heart. After all he was coming home triumphant, a victor, one who had sought treasure and found it, one who had found the greatest riches of God's mercy.

Mr. Gates was not a hard man to work for. Glen became more and more convinced of this as the days went by, but the crowning proof came one year later when the kind employer ordered him to drop his work and take a week's vacation at the Scout camp at Buffalo Lake.

Glen planned a great surprise, but some one gave his secret away for he was met at the station at Buffalo Center by the entire troop. Chick-chick jumped up on the steps before the train stopped and at peril of life and limb pulled him off the train into the receptive arms of Apple and Matt. Big Tom Scoresby gave him grip for grip in a mighty scout handshake—the only scout who could match him. Goosey hung on to his elbow waiting for his turn. All affectation of reserve disappeared on this great occasion—the greeting of Brick Mason—his welcome to camp—good old Brick! Glen was glad to shake hands with Mr.

Newton for a good long minute so that he might wink back the suspicious moisture that threatened to rush past the guardian eyelashes.

"Brick rides on my old motor-bike," exclaimed Chick-chick. "Same old bike—it is."

"Brick walks with the troop," Glen decided. "Where did we get this dandy road?"

"Built by the Buffalo Lake Summer Colony," explained Apple. "Do you notice all the new stores in town—all because of the Colony? Wait until you get to the Lake and you'll see something worth while."

A few minutes later Glen stood before Troop Three's splendid new club-house in appreciative silence.

"Do you see what we've named it?" said Matt, patting him on the shoulder. "Look up over the porch."

Carved in ancient script were the words:

YE BREAD BOX

"And you don't object to that?" asked Glen, looking into Matt's face.

"I object?" exclaimed Matt. "It's a compliment. I've learned to take a joke as well as give one. We named it because the money that built it was our share of the reward for the box in

the cave, and the second box was a lot like the first box only different."

"Different inside an' out," put in Chick-chick. "Jus' like old Matty is, it was. Good old Bread Box. Go on in an' see what's inside, Brick."

"All right," Glen agreed. "Lead the way."

"Don't be 'fraid, Brick. Go in all your own self. It's a surprise."

Cautiously Glen pushed open the handsome door and stepped inside. Nothing happened. He looked around the spacious room with its home-like accommodations and its air of easy comfort. From a chair by the window a gentleman arose and started leisurely toward him. Glen covered the intervening space in two jumps.

"Will!" he shouted. "Will Spencer! Look out—you'll fall!"

"Never more, you good old scout," said Jolly Bill, as he flung a strong arm around Glen's broad shoulders. "I can walk as gracefully as you if not as powerfully. I'm all O. K., warranted not to slip or stumble, ready to give a Castle Cake-walk or an imitation of a Highland fling at a moment's notice. What do you think of your new home?"

"Splendid!" replied Glen. "Too fine for a scout camp, though. It makes it too easy."

"And the easy life isn't the best life is it, you hard old Brick? But Mr. Newton understands that. This isn't the camp—just the club-house. You'll find the camp a half mile up Buffalo Creek as wild as ever, and do you know what they've named it this year?"

"I give it up," said Glen.

"It's named in honor of the scout who has done most with his opportunities this year."

"It's Burton, then," Glen guessed.

"You have another guess coming yet," said Jolly Bill. "They've named it Camp Mason!"

Now if you want to follow the further adventures of Glen and his scout chums you will find them recorded in another book "Boy Scouts to the Rescue."

FINIS

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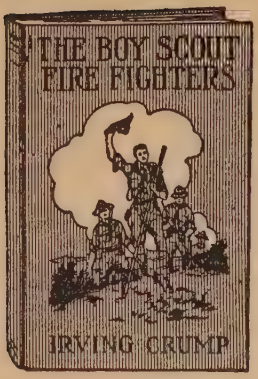

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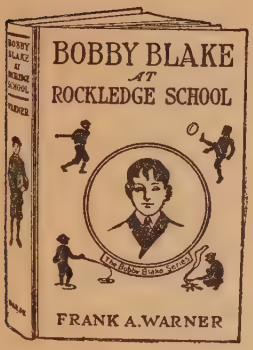

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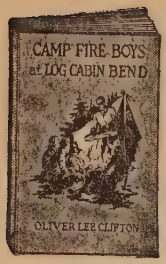

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